

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
THE SAINTS
Infirmities.

Delivered in severall Sermons by JOHN
PRESTON, Dr. of Divinity
Mr. of Emanuel Colledge
in Cambridge.



And late Preacher of Lincolnes Inne.

AMSTERDAM,

Printed for T.L. and are to be sould
at his Chamber in Flowingburrow
neare unto the English
Church.

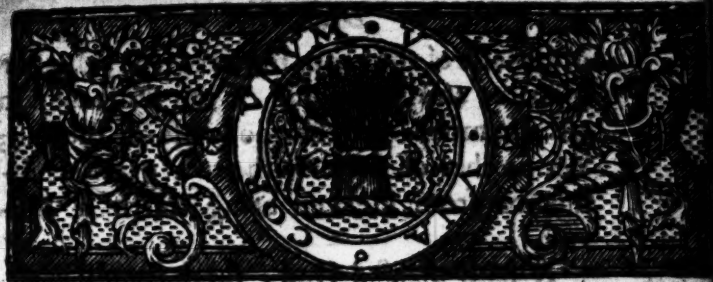
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PRYSTON, D. of Divinity,
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~~MY~~ TO ~~THE~~
THE LEARNED AND
Religious Gentleman
HENRY LAURENCE

~~Esquire~~

Esquire.

~~Esquire~~



Orthy Sir, although your
owne native worth might
justly draw from us a greater
testimony of observance, than
the putting of this litle *Trea-*
tise into your hand; Yet have
wee beene rather hereunto
induced, by the consideration of such adorn-
ments of *wisdome, learning, & piety* in you, as
had expresse relation to the authour, and may
seeme to bee the fruit and issues of his labours
in your yonger yeares. It is true indeed that
the goodnes of the soile ads much unto the

greatnesse of the crop; But is as true, that the industry and wisdom of the Husbandman adds also much unto the goodnesse of the soile; Yet neither of these without a gracious influence from Heaven bring forth a Harvest.

It hath pleased God, there should be extant divers monuments, whereby the Authors eminent abilities doe yet survive in the hearts, and esteeme of men; Yet none expresse him more unto the life, than the piety and vertue of those that grew up under him; *He lives if they stand fast in the Lord.* Among whom, as you had a greater intimacy of all the nearest, not of a pupill, but of a bosom friend, and continuall Companion, and therein a longer time: So have you answered it, as then in love and respect to him, so since in a proportionable and happy improvement of what you did conceive. And therefore as we conceived, it would be a derogation injurious to your candid and ingenuous disposition, to thinke you unwilling to bee put in minde of him, by whose religious care you were so often put in minde of God, and of your selfe: So also an unworthy and ungratefull disrespect, to have omitted the inscription of your name; Especially by
us,

Dedictory.

us, who long have been, and are,

Your loving and obliged
Friends,

Tho. Goodwin.

Tho. Bell.

Imprimatur Tho. VVeeke
Episco. Cap. Dom.

A 3

SER.

The Saints

SERMONS

BY

JOHN PRESTON

Dr. of D.

2. Chron. 30. 18. 19. 20.

18. *For a Multitude of the people even many of Ephraim, and Manasse, Issachar and Zebulun had not cleansed themselves; yet did they eat the Passover otherwise then it was written, but Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, the good Lord pardon every one.*

19. *That prepareth his heart to seek God: The Lord God of his Fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.*

20. *And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.*

Upon



PON the occasion of these words was the illegality of some resorters to the Pascover at this Time, for this solemne Duty having been long neglected, by occasion of the negligence of former Governours: *Ezekiab* sends his Messengers not onely into *Juda*, but also into *Israel*, to assemble them, if it were possible, unto this great Solemnity, which was effected with various successe, for in some places they were entertain'd with scoffs; in others, with great readinesse, to submit themselves unto this Sacred ordinance, but the warning being short, and journey long, there were many wanted legal cleansing; *Hexekiah* seeing the promptnesse of the people, and that in the substance of the Duty they had not fayled, puts up this Prayer to Almighty God, in their behalfe.

In which Prayer we have these three things to be considered, and understood.

1. The substance of it, which was, that GOD would pardon, or be mercifull.

2. The persons for whom he made it, and they are described two wayes.

1. From the preparation of their Soules and inward man, they prepared their whole hearts.

2. From the imperfections of their outward and legall preparations, they were not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.

3. The surcesse and issue that it had, which was the healing of the people, that is, God blessed that ordinance of his for the removall of that outward guilt, contracted by those ceremoniall neglects, or otherwise, and for the strengthening of their Soules in grace and holinesse, and for the curing of their outward estate, which lay open at this time to many pressures and calamities on every side. The points of Doctrin might be many that would hence arise, but we doe purpose onely to handle two.

Doct. 1. That in all the parts of publicke worship and performances, the Lord especially requires, and expects the Heart bee right; he would have nothing wanting, but of all the rest hee would not have the heart imperfect, or defective, the good Lord, (sayes this good King) be mercifull to every one that prepareth his whole heart, to seeke the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not clensed, that is, though hee be in other things imperfect and defective: So Solomon, this good Kings predecessor, *Prov. 4. 23. Keepe thy heart with all diligence*, thy foot is not to be neglected, *Eccle. 5. 1.* but to be kept, but not with so much care and circumspection as the heart, that part must not be wanting, what-ever other parts were, and therefore if any were in this defective *Hexakiab* prayes not for them.

Reas. 1. Because the heart is that which God himselfe doth most delight in, no duty can be well performed where God himselfe doth not vouchsafe his presence and assistance. *Heb. 12. 15. By him therefore let us offer the Sacrifice of praise to God*

God continually, that is, by his assistance & gracious presente, but where there is not a heart to receive & entertaine God in, he never will, nor doth afford his presente. *Esa. 66. 1, 2. Heave is my throne & the earth my foot stoole, &c.* But to this man will I looke, even to him that is poore, & of a contrite heart, according to that of the *Psal. 51. 17. The Sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, &c.*

Though to the eye of men it may seeme a despicable and meane abode, for such a glorious & excellling Majesty, yet sure it is not so by him accounted; when a great man is to bee received into our houses, we are careful that there be no breaches in them; but when the great & glorious God is to be received into our hearts, he will not stumble at the wounds and breaches..

The heart is that onely part, whereby God estimates, and makes a judgement of the whole, hee takes measure of a man by his heart, if that bee sound and upright, hee never curiously examines other parts; we commonly are taken with the face and countenance, because we are not able to looke deeper; but God regards not that, as being able to descend into the secret closet of the heart *1. Sam. 16. 6. 7. And hee looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lords annointed is before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Looke not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; For man looketh on the outward appearance; but the Lord seeth the heart.*

And accordingly yee have the doome of almost all the Kings of Iudab, according to the goodnesse or badnesse of their hearts: 2. Chron. 25. 2. *Hee did that which was right in the sight of God, but not with a perfect heart*: And the like is also testified of many other of them.

Reason 3. The heart is the hardest piece to manage & manure, & therefore he that keeps that well in tune, is not likely to bee wanting in the other: if in a Violl, I finde the Treble string in tune; I make no questiō of the Base that goes not out easily: Symon Magnus had composed the other parts, Act. 8. 13. *He did beleewe, & was Baptized*: but this string was out of tune, the Apostle findes this jarring, ver. 21. *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this businesse, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God*. In his owne sight no question but hee thought it so, but it was not so in Gods sight: And indeed the heart is so deceitful, that it wil deceive the very owner & possessor of it: like to your jugglers, that will doe a thing before your face, & yet you shall not see them do it, 2. King. *Why weepest my Lord?* (saith Hazael) *Why* (saies the Prophet) *for the great evill, that I know thou wilt doe unto the Children of Israel; their strong holds thou wilt set on fire, &c.* And Hazael said, *Is thy servant a dogge, that hee should doe this great things?* There were Characters of cruelty ingravē on his heart, which himselfe had never read, nor beene acquainted yet withall, *Who knoweth* (saith the Apostle) 1. Cor. 2. 11. *the things of a man but the the spirit of man that is within him?* One would thinke a man should read his owne hand, yet some

some do write so bad, that they cannot read it when they have done; and so did *Hazael*, he had hatcht such cursed thoughts within him, that he could not see unto the utmost *terminus* & end of them; if a man hath a spot upon his face, he is warned of it by every body else, because its knowne hee cannot see it; but he may have a thousand spots upon his heart & neither he, nor no man in the world beside be able to discover it: he therefore, that hath wel prepared this part, will hardly be defective in the rest.

Reason 4. The heart is the spring and first wheele of all that curious Clocke-worke of the soule; so that if that bee but ordered and kept a-right, it will direct & order all the rest, & this is the reason that the Holy Ghost is pleased for to give, *Prov. 4. 23.* *Out of it are issues of life:* If a man had a Wel or Fountaine in his garden, out of which came all the liquors that he used, he had neede be very diligent to keepe that cleane; if that were poisoned, it should be hard for himselfe long to scape. Now the heart is such a fountaine, *Rom. 10. 10.* *With the heart man believeth to righteousness, And from within, even out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,* &c. *Mar. 7. 21.* the Gentiles were accounted common and prophane before Christs time, but after their hearts were purified, even Peter himselfe, the Apostle of the Circumcision, durst venture on them, *Act. 15. 9.* *For God put no difference betweene them and the Iewes, after that by faith hee had purified their hearts:* give me never so bad a man, make but his heart right, and I dare venture to close with him, if ye take out the
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Serpents sting, he may bee played with, or otherwise employed, without either danger or other inconvenience.

Vse. Let us every one be hence encouraged to examine well, and looke unto our hearts; For if they be any way disordered and out of tune, our actions and performances will not be relished. Remember what the Apostle saith, *Heb. 3. 12.* Take heed Brethren lest there be in any of you an evillheart of unbeliese, to depart from the living God; An unbeleeving & evill heart will evermore bee drawing backe frō God, wil not come at him by its good will, *Mat. 15. 8. 9.* They honour mee with their lips, but their hearts are removed far from mee. And what then became of all their worship? why surely it came to nothing, *In vaine they worship mee:* A heartlesse worship is a worship that God regards not; but if the heart bee framed and prepared as it should be, God looks not at the many imperfections that may be found in circumstantiall matters.

Quest. But it will bee here demanded, how one may know when his heart is truly qualified and fitted for a duty?

Answ. 1. When he is perswaded of a speciall and peculiar eye of God upon him in the duty, that God in a speciall manner doth behold him, and observe him how hee doth it; Hee must beleeve that God is at his Elbow, *Heb. 11. 6.* He that commeth to God, must beleeve that God is; That is, must have his heart delivered from that blindness, wherein by nature all mens hearts remaine. What was the reason that the Gentiles, even in their
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Solemne worship of their Gods, were so abhominable oftentimes? because their hearts were darke & blinde in spirituall & celestially matters, *Rom. 1. 21. 22. 23.* Their foolish hearts were darkened, & the they changed the truth of God into a lye, & worshipped the Creature in stead of the Creator &c. But when the heart is seriously convinced that God is present, records & registers all our deportments whatsoever: it makes us circumspect & carfull, evē those that are otherwise regardlesse of their duties; yet when their Masters eie is on them, will consider what they doe: and therefore the Apostle requires of Christian Servants more, *Ephes. 6. 6.* Because the heathen would doe thus much, the very Asse, when shee saw the Angel in the passage, behaves her selfe accordingly. *Num. 22. 23.* If a man would therefore know, whether his heart be fitted and prepared for any duty, let him seriously examine, whether hee is thus persuaded of the speciall eye of God upon him in it. 2. The heart is then prepared for a duty & service unto God, when it is sequestred & taken off from other things: when the drosse & staine of naturall selfe-love, & earthly mindnesse is gotten out: as we see, men bring not filthy vessels, unwashed, & uncleansed to their Masters Table.

Yee may see, perhaps, an impure & filthy vessel in the Kitchen, but upon the Table it is not tollerable: These men that came unto the Passover, although not washed according to the purification of Sanctuary; yet where no question, purged inwardly.

They

They had, no doubt, a substantiall, though not a Ceremoniall cleansing, according to that of the Apostle, *1. Tim. 2, 21. If a man doe therefore purge himselfe from these, he shall be a vessell unto honour sanctified, and meeete for the Masters use, and prepared unto every good worke.*

Ther's none of us would have our meate come up upon a dirty Dish, and much lesse God. When *David* asked for some holy Shew-bread from the Priests, he tells him withall, that the vessels of the young men, that were to carry it, were holy, *1. Sam. 21. 5.* So must our hearts be, when we adventure to draw neare to God: And though we cannot here attaine a perfect purity, but that corruption will still be mingled with our best performances, yet that must be removed, and laid aside, that kept us back from turning to the Lord: The rubbish of necessity must be removed, that stops the building from going on, *1. Pet. 1. 12. 23. Seeing yee have purified your soules to the obedience of the truth, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, &c. Being borne againe, &c.* That is, seeing that originall impurity, that blocked up the soule from turning unto God, is done away, the heapes of muck & rubbish, that stood where now the building is erected; For that's done allwayes at the first conversion of the soule to God, and never fully doth returne.

3. When it is softened, and firted to receive impressions: When the *Centurion* by much dejection and prostration of his soule to God in secret, had his heart so mollified, that any thing would
make

make a Character or Print : Hee tells Peter, *Hee was ready to heare whatsoever God should be pleased for to speake, Act. 10. 33.* It's not enough that the mettall be refined, and purged from the drosse, that before did cleave unto it : unlesse it likewise be so softned, as that it will accomodate itselfe unto the mold, or stampe it shall be cast into: and therefore it's powred into that while it is soft and liquid. So the Apostle *Rom. 6. 17.* argues, they now were truely freed from the dominion and power of their former unregenerate estate, because their Hearts did yeeld unto the stampe that was imprinted on them, *'Εκ τῆς ἀναγκῆς τῆς πίστεως ἀδυνατώμενοι.* As the mettall then is judged to bee sufficiently continued in the Furnace, when it willingly receives the forme and figure of that which it is cast and powred into. Thus Paul was melted by that Sunne of Righteousnesse, that shone into his soule when he was going upon other errands, *Act. 9. 6.* And he trembling and astonishd, saying, Lord, what wilt thou have mee for to doe? As if he should have said, This fire of thy love hath now so thawed and melted my obdurate, and kicking soule, that it is prepared for any mould, to receive what print soever thou shalt bee pleased for to stampe upon it: Put mee into whatsoever shape thou wilt, I am now ready for any mold; To be a Preacher, that have been a persecutor; To suffer my selfe, that have beene the cause of so much suffering to others formerly; and therefore no marvaile, if the Lord professeth he would look to such alone, *Isaiah 66. 2.* because onely such are fitted to bee wrought

wrought upon; whereas unbroken and unmollified spirits submit to nothing, but the Word is as water spilt upon the Rocke, that makes no manner of impressiō.

4. The heart is then prepared for a duty, when it makes the duty but a bridge to lead him unto God, when it rests not in the deed, but passeth by it, and through it to God: Yee have many very frequent in the outward Acts of duty, will heare, and pray, and fast, and preach perhaps; Yet raise their soules no higher than the outward act alone. *Hos. 7. 14.* And they have not cryed unto mee with their hearts, when they bowed upon their beds: Therefore not with their hearts, because not unto mee, or at least, with hearts well qualified, and fitted for that holy duty: There were some (it may bee) among these people that came unto the Pascheover to please the King, because the King was pleased for to have it so, and so they should, but if they rested there, and went no farther, their service would not be accepted, neither were they included in *Hezekiabs* Prayer; For he onely prayes for them that sought the Lord God of their Fathers; Not that sought the face of the Ruler, or the favour of this godly King, or any other bie and carnal end. So *Esa. 55.*
 6. Seeke the Lord while he may be found The duty is ordayned to draw and to allure the soule to God, no more but an opportunity, that God and men may trade, and have commerce with one another: As *Solomon* did therefore build the glorious Temple to the Lord, that he might dwell with men: *2. Chron. 7. 12.* But now if any rested
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in that Temple, and went no higher, he had no interest in any promise that was made unto it; for the condition of the promise was, that they should seeke his face, *Ver. 14.* If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seeke my face, and turne from their wicked way: Then will I heare from Heavens, and will forgive their sinne, and will heale their Land: if they shall humble themselves, and pray, and seeke my face; But if they prayed never, so much, and in their prayers had onely respect and aime unto themselves, hee would not heare them: It is a strange expression of the Prophet, *Amos 5. 25. 26.* Have yee offered unto me Sacrifice, and offerings in the wilderness, by the space of forty yeares, O ye House of Israel? Why, what did they with the Tabernacle, and all their furniture? But accommodate their publicke service in the wilderness; no sayes God, Yee did it to your selves; your ends and aimes were carnall, sensual, and earthly in it, and you had no profit by it, as neither have many now a dayes; For want of disposing and preparing of their hearts for God aright. And so we have done with the first poynt observed from the Text.

Wee are now to come unto the latter part, and reason of this Holy mans request, which was their not being cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary, which was a legall barre and lett to stop them from the Paschever, how upright and sincere soever they were: Wherefore

he labours by earnest prayer to remove this barre and great impediment, and the Lord expresseth here his willingnes to be intreated; For the Lord heard his prayer, and healed the people, whence this will follow.

Where there is uprightnes and sincerity of heart, Infirmities do not exclude from mercy. This is apparant in the Text, for hee prayes for mercy, and hath it granted, although they were not qualified as God required, and may be further proved.

From the wisdom of God, who knowes what we can doe, and will expect no more; As a wise parent will not looke for so much from a weake childe, as from a strong; nor from a sicke servant, as from a healthfull; It is his wisdom to consider what we are, and accordingly to deale with us; And therefore we may bee sure that hee will not cast us off for our infirmities, but as Father beares with his Sonne that feares him, though he spyas many faults in him: *Like as a Father pittyeeth his Children, so the Lord pittyeeth them that feare him. For hee knoweth our frame, he remembreth that we are but dust, Psal. 103. 13. 14. So the Lord hath compassion on them that feare him.* Why? because he knowes whereof we are made, he remembreth that we are but dust. So we see, that when the Israelites had so provoked God, that he could scarce hold his hand off them; yet he stayed his hand, even then when he was ready to strike. And many times saith the Text, *Psal. 78. 38. 39. But*

he being full of compassion, forgave their iniquities, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stirre up his wrath; For he remembered that they were but flesh, and that they were even a winde that passeth away and cometh not againe. Hee called backe his anger, because he remembered they were but flesh. And herein God shewes his wisdom, and wee ours: A wise man looks for no more of his servant than hee is able to doe: But on the contrary, a foolish man expects as much from a weaker, as from a stronger, and falls presently upon him if hee does not as much: So we our selves shew our wisdom in other things, as for Example.

If there were a little Gold, and much drosse mingled together; A wise man will not for the drosse sake cast away the gold, but purifie and trye it: So if we have Corne, although there be some cockle in it, yet a wise Husband-man will not reject it, but winnow it and purge it.

So God being a wise God, doth not cast us off presently for our infirmities, if there be any truth and sincerity in us: And as God is wise, so compassionate, and beares with our infirmities.

The Taske-masters wanted compassion, and therefore expected more from the *Israelites* than they were able to do: So whilst we were under the Law, there was a burthen laid upon us, which neither wee nor our Fathers could beare; but now if wee be once under grace, the Lord doth not lay such loads upon us: But if there be truth

in the heart, he accepts of our endeavours although accompanied with many weaknesses.

Reason 2. A second reason is taken from the covenant, for so long as a man is in the covenant his infirmities cannot cut him off from Gods mercy. Now it is certaine, wee may have many infirmities, and the covenant remaine unbroken: For every sin doth not breake the covenant, but those that untie the marriage knot: As in marriage every offence doth not disannull the marriage, but onely the breach of the marriage vow: To wit, adultery; So onely here those finnes that breake the covenant, which untie the marriage knot, (as it were) and that is;

First, when wee take any new master, and thus wee doe when we let any sinne reigne in our hearts; if we set up any sinne that commands and rules us; Then the covenant is broken, for thou hast chosen a new Master.

2. Secondly, if we take another Husband; and thus wee doe, when we make a league with sinne; if wee be in league with any thing in the world, that drawes our hearts from God, wee breake our covenant in choosing another Husband. But other failings doe not breake the covenant, and whiles it remaines in force, we have interest in Gods mercies, for hee cannot forget his covenant; Which if he should, yet Christ is the Mediator, and would put him in minde of it.

Reason

Reason 3. A third reason is drawne from the common condition of all the Saints; Take all the Saints that ever lived, and every one of them have had infirmities. Now if God should be too extreme to marke our iniquities, (*Psalm 130. 3. 4.*) who should stand? If God should cast off all that have infirmities, then none should be saved, and then wherefore hath Christ dyed? But saith the Psalmist: *Mercy is with thee, therefore thou art to be feared*: That is, if God were so severe a Master, that he would endure no failing, then he should have no servants; But it is his mercy that makes him to be feared. And thus wee see, that infirmities doe not cut us off from Gods mercy, if we be sound at the heart; But withall we must remember these two Cautions.

Caution 1. First though infirmities do not utterly exclude us from the mercies of God; yet they may bring upon us many & sore afflictions, and hinder us of many blessings: & here we must remember these distinctions.

1. First, there is a voluntary infirmity, which proceeds from our owne wils; & by how much the more will is in an infirmity, by so much the more God is provoked to anger, and to punish and afflict us.

But there is another infirmity which ariseth from some impediment which a man would faine remove, but he cannot. As for example: A man would faine remember all he heareth, but he cannot, because his memory is fraile, and he cannot help it; He would convert many to God, but

he cannot, because he hath weak parts. He would faine have such a lust removed, but God doth not please to set his Spirit at liberty, though he do his uttermost endeavour, for that must still be remembered; For if a man sayes hee would pray fervently morning and evening, and yet sits still, and doth not set upon the duty and strive to doe it; This is the act of the sluggard: So also in other things.

2. Secondly, there is an infirmity that ariseth from want of growth, for there are some Babes in Christ, some buds that are but tender, even as a tree hath some buds and sprouts as well as branches; And these sucke sappe from the tree, as well as the branches. Now, God beares much with those that are such, and will not presently punish them for their failings; Hee will not in this case quench the smoaking Flaxe, nor breake the bruised Reede: Hee will not put new wine into old vessels; He knowes there is much of the old man still in them, and therefore will not enioyne them to such great duties as they are not able to performe; He will not put too much on them at the first; He commands us not to reject or despise those that are weake, Rom. 14. 13. *Let us not therefore judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling blocke, or an occasion to fall in his brothers way.* And sure then, himselfe will practise that rule that he prescribes to us.

But now there are other infirmities that arise from sicknesse, in those thave beene strong, and through

through some distempers are become sicke, and are fallen from their first love, as in the 2. of the Rev. 2. 4. 5. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love: Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and doe thy first workes, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his place, except thou repent, Or that arise from some desertion, themselves being then causes of it, by reason of presumption, as in Peter and Hezekiah; Now in this case, God doth not beare with a man, but will come against him quickly, and will not stay long, unlesse they repent, and doe their first workes.

3. VVe must remember that to some, God hath appointed a lesser stature in grace, and to others greater: There are Christians of all sizes, as it were. Now those that are of the least size, they are the weakest, and these are generally weake, that is, they are weake in their understandings, weake in affections, weake in all; and with these God beares much: As we may see in the Church of Thyatira, Rev. 2. 24. 25. But unto you I say, and unto the rest of Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not knowne the depths of Satan, as they speake: I will put upon you none other burthen; but that which you have already, hold fast till I come. There were some that were expert, and others that were weaker, Now for those saith God, that have not this learning, neither have knowne the

deepnesse of Satan , I doe not require so much of you, but onely , that you hold fast that which yee have.

4. Fourthly ; but now there is another infirmity , which doth not runne in generall over the whole man , but is some particular infirmity, which is in a man that is strong, and hath attained a greater measure of grace : As a body may be strong, and have some particular weaknesse ; And a wall may be strong, yet have some weake parts : So a Christian may have strong lusts : Some particular infirmities ; as indulgencies to his Children, or pride, or any other ; So then this rule is true. That strong infirmities bring strong afflictions : As we see it did in *Ely*, for his indulgency, and so in *David* , he had strong and long afflictions, for his strong lusts.

5. Fifthly, we are to remember, that there is an infirmity in a man that he is sensible of, & strives against it with all his might , and yet cannot get victory over it : God may suffer a man to labour and tugge , and yet profit nothing by his paines, but gives him grace , which is sufficient for him ; Hee gives his pardoning grace , though not his prevailing grace , 2 Cor. 12. 9. In this case God will beare much, though he cannot get the victory, yet he may get pardon.

6. Sixthly, but there is another infirmity , that befalls us in peace and prosperity , that wee are not sensible of , but are as it were in a sleepe, and so let some infirmity steale upon us ; And in this case , though it will not quite

cut us off from Gods mercy, yet it will bring some great affliction upon us, whereby God doth waken us, and bring us unto our selves againe: So hee dealt with *Hezekiah*, no sooner was hee settled in peace and prosperity, but presently he forgets himselfe, suffers pride to steale in upon him, for which wee know how the Lord awaked him. So *David*, *Psal. 30.* when hee was in prosperity thought he should never bee removed; but then God hides his face, and makes him looke about him; therefore wee must remember this caution:

That though in firmities doe not cut us off from Gods mercies; yet if volūtary infirmities in which our will hath a hand, if such as are not fro weaknes, & want of growth, but from sicknesse, if they be some particular weaknes in a strong Christian, if they steale upon us by our owne sloath, and we are not aware, nor sensible of them; then they will bring upon us some great crosse and affliction, & hinder us of some great blessings.

Caution 2. The second Caution is, that yee take heede, that yee doe not mistake those infirmities that proceede from the regenerate part, for those finnes that proceed from the unregenerate: for these latter are rebellions not infirmities; they are wicknesses, not weaknesses; and therefore we must beware, that we do not mistake the one for the other.

To this purpose, it will bee needfull to know what an infirmity is, and this wee may doe by the contrary, if wee consider what strength is.

Now for this wee must know that there is a twofold strength.

First, a naturall strength.

Secondly, a supernaturall.

First, a naturall strength is that, by which wee performe the worke of Nature; This in it selfe is neither pleasing, nor displeasing to God; But as a Cypher, when it stands by it selfe is nothing, but a figure being set before it, it encrease the summe; so this naturall strength neither pleaseth God, nor displeaseth, but as it is in a regenerate man, or unregenerate man, so it helps or hurts.

Secondly, there is a supernaturall strength, by which wee are enabled to doe more than Nature could helpe us to, & this is either for evill or good things.

I. First, there is a supernaturall strength that tends to evill, when as to naturall, Sathan addes a supernaturall, to enable men to evill; Such a strength have they who dyed for *Turcisme*, and the like; who kill Kings, &c. see how the Apostle sets out this, *2. Thes. 2. 9. 10.*

Such a strength have they that write, and dispute against the truth, they have the strength of mad men, which wee say, are three men strong; So likewise there is a supernaturall weaknesse, when to naturall imbecillity there is a superadded weaknesse: in the 8. of *Luke 12.* there wee see that the first ground forgat the Word: why? Through weaknesse onely? No; but Sa. han he helps on, *he comes and takes away the Word, &c.* And so we read of a more than naturall unap-
nelle

nesse to receive the Gospell, 2. Cor. 4. 34. *The Devill puts to his hand, hee blinds their eyes, that the light of the Gospell should not shine to them; He helps forward the naturall weaknesse.*

Secondly, there is supernaturall strength to doe good, as *Christ bad his Disciples to stay at Ierusalem, till they were endued with strength from above Luke 24. 49.* because they were to enter upon a great worke, above naturall strength; To wit, to preach the Gospell, therefore they had neede have strength above nature, because they were to preach the Gospell.

This supernaturall strength wee may know by this; It will enable us to doe more than Nature can, it over-flies the reach of Nature, or mortality, or common grace: Nature can doe as much as lyes in her power, or as is her worke: But there are some things which Nature, though never so well refined, can never reach unto.

As Iron can doe as much as is in Iron, if it bee made bright & fit for those severall uses it serves unto: But if you would have this Iron to turne to the North, it cannot doe it, till it bee touched with the Loap-stone, and hath a higher quality added to it. So take the purest water, and it can doe what is in the power of water, it can moitten, coole, descend, or the like: but if you would have water to heate, to ascend, it must be by a supernaturall power, and by a superadded vertue. And so take nature, and let it be refined with more vertues, and common graces, and it can doe as much as is in nature. But if you would have it love God, or some such higher worke, it cannot doe

doe it ; The water riseth no higher than the Spring from whence it came : So naturall men can ascend no higher than nature, and therefore for workes of a higher reach , there must be strength from above to performe them.

Question. But what are those things which nature cannot superficially enable a man to doe?

Answer. Take the best of the Heathen, or the best naturall man, and meere nature cannot enable him to doe these things following.

First, it cannot bring him to this , to preferre God before himselfe upon this perswasion , that his wel-being doth depend more on God , than on himselfe.

2. Secondly , it cannot enable a man to see sinne, as the greatest evil in the world , and so to hate it , and to looke upon Christ, as the greatest good in the world, and so to embrace him.

3. Thirdly , nature cannot make a man resolute, not to part with Christ upon any teatmes, but willing rather to beare the greatest persecutions on the one side , and to refuse the greatest offers on the other side , than to part with his Christ.

4. Fourthly , nature cannot make a man to love God , for this is a distinguishing property of a godly man , and so are all the other affections ; Now a naturall man cannot hate sinne, cannot grieve for wickednes, as abomination to God : Take this for a rule , that howsoever naturall men may know much, and doe much , yet they

they have no spirituall affection ; They have no spirituall love , hatred , grieve , or joy.

5. A fifth thing which nature cannot do , and which this supernaturall strength doth , is this, it overcomes and subdues the lustings of our owne spirits, and that not by restraint, but putting in it a contrary lusting, the spirit lusts against the flesh; This supernaturall strength of the spirit , it hemmes us about , it comprehends and keepes us : *Acts 20. 22. Behold I goe bound in the Spirit* (saith Saint Paul) *to Ierusalem* : When a mans owne spirit would fall loose, this supernaturall strength stayes and strengthens it; When God leaves any of the Saints to nakednesse and emptinesse of his owne spirit , he becomes as another man; as it was said of *Sampson*, they become weake as water; as wee see in *Eliar David*, and *Peter*. But when this supernaturall strength is within us , it sits at the sterne and guides us, and carries us through all. Now then if thou findest that thou hast any strength in thee more than natural, though it be but a little, all thy infirmities shall not exclude thee from the mercies of God in Christ.

Vse. Is if so? bee not then discouraged for any of thy infirmities, but come boldly to the throne of grace : it is a great fault in Christians, if because of such, or such an infirmity they be kept from the throne of grace , or weaken their assurance : It was the commendation of *Iob*, (*Iob 27. 5. 6.*) who (notwithstanding all his infirmities) would not let go his righteousness.

Looke upon *Aſa*, his infirmities were many, as to imprison the Prophet; to trust to the Phyſician more than God, &c. Yet becauſe there was an uprightneſſe of heart, ſee whatteſtimony the Lord gives of him in the 2. *Cron.* 14. 2. The like in *Iobaſaphat*. So *David* had many foule infirmities, yet becauſe ſound at the heart, God call's him, a man after his owne heart. So *Saraab* (notwithſtanding her infirmities) is commended as a patterne to wives. 1. *Pet.* 3. 6. *Rahab*, her infirmities are paſſed over, and ſhee commended for her faith and good workes. *James* 2. *Heb.* 11. And therefore (notwithſtanding our infirmities) let us truſt perfectly in the grace of *Ieſus Chriſt*, and if vve ſee they doe abound, let us lay the more on *Chriſt*, as needing his helpe the more.

Uſe 2. The ſecond uſe is from the firſt Caution: ſeeing infirmities, though they doe not cut us off from Gods mercy, yet they may bring upon us many troubles; therefore let us take heed of the; it is not a ſmall matter to be ſubject to infirmities: ſo it was but an infirmity in *Rebeckah* & *Jacob*, to compaſſe the bleſſing by indirect meanes.

But conſider what it coſt him, a great deale of griefe & paine: And ſee how deare *David*'s infirmities did coſt him: So *Moſes*, when he diſtruſted God, God would not ſuffer him to goe into the Land of *Canaan*; theſe were all great afflictions, which their infirmities brought upō them, though they did not caſt them out of Gods favour, therefore if wee would avoyde ſuch troubles, let us beware of living under infirmities.

Uſe 3. The third uſe is from the ſecond Caution,

tion, that we do not mistake rebellion & wickedness, for infirmities & weaknes. Now seeing wee may easily bee deceived; let us try and examine our selves narrowly; for it is the use of men to shroud themselves under infirmities; they say, *their meaning is good*, &c. but it is their infirmity. And on the other side, many are upright in heart, and because they have *infirmities*, they think they have no grace; & therefore we had need to judge both with righteous judgement.

Now to helpe you in your tryall, consider first what an *infirmity* is: Secondly the signes of it.

First, an *infirmity* is such a weaknesse, as when the heart is upright, yet by reason of some impediment, it cannot doe that good it would, and doth the evill it would not. So that there must be first uprightnesse of heart, else it is not an *infirmity*, but iniquity; the heart must be perfect with God in all things, there must be a purpose to please God in all.

2 Secondly, the reason that it cannot doe so, is from some impediment that hinders: and this ariseth from the rebellion of his flesh, which leads him captive makes him omit the good that he would doe, & doe the evill he would not.

But now secondly, to come to the notes & characters: For a carnall man and godly man, both be guilty of one and the same infirmities, as to have their hearts wandring in prayer, in reading, and to idlenesse in their calling, &c. Yet these may be wickednesse in the one, but weaknesse in the other; and therefore to know this, consider these signes

First,

Signe. First, if it be an infirmity, it continues not but assaults thee by fits, & starts, & so away; & afterwards thou wilt returne to thy former course: As a stone that is throwne up it flies as long as the force of the hand that threw it remains; but after it takes its owne course againe: but if it continue upon thee, it is signe that it is naturall to thee: As a stone it rests upon the earth, because it is the naturall place of it: my meaning is not, but that an infirmity may assault a man all his life, for so some may, as wee shall shew afterwards: But I say it comes by fits, & so is gone. This we see in *David*, in *Peter*, and the rest of the Saints that their infirmities continued not so, but that afterwards they returned to their course againe.

Secondly, when a man amends not up o^r admonition, it is a signe it is not an infirmity; if a man intends to goe to such a place, & one should meet him, & tell him, this is not the way, & direct him into the right way, hee would thanke him, and returne into the right way, because that is the way hee intended to goe. So if your faces be set towards *Ierusalem*, and one should tell you, here you went out of the way, ye would be glad of it, and returne.

So it was with *David*, when he would have slaine *Nabal* in a passion, and *Abigail* met him, & stayed him: Oh how thankfull he was to God, & her! it was a signe it was but an infirmity: and so in the case of *Vriah*, when *Nathan* told him, hee was in the wrong: *Prov. 25. 12. Hee that reprovethe the wise and obedient, it is as a golden earring, or as an ornament of gold, saith Solomon; That*

is, hee whose heart is upright, whose intent is to grow rich in grace, accounts of those that reprove him, as, of golden ornaments : But if a man after admonition & reproofe will take his own course, it is a signe of his wickednesse, and not infirmity.

3. Againe thirdly, a sinne of infirmity is all wayes with griefe and sorrow of heart for that weakenesse : Now what is griefe, but the endeavour and strife of the will ; When a man cannot attaine to that hee would, or would shun something hee cannot avoyd, then hee is grieved and pained : As it is in the body, all the griefe there, is, when a part or member cannot performe its office or function : So in the Soule when it would faine doe such a thing, when the desire of the minde is set on such, or such an object, and it cannot attaine it, then followes griefe : So here, when the heart is drawne up to please God in all things, and something comes in the way that it cannot, and therefore it is grieved, and therefore in the 2. Cor. 10. 12. the Apostle makes this sorrow a ground of their uprightnesse, and it is certaine, where this griefe is not mingled, it is no infirmity.

4. Every sinne of infirmity, produceth a hearty complaint, and an earnest desire, and a serious endeavour to have it cured, for every infirmity in a body that is quickened, hath some life in it, and so is sensible of it : As in a disease that a man is sensible of, he tels his friends, or any other that he is in Company with, of it, to see if they can helpe him : if they cannot, hee complains

to the Physician, & goes to him to haue it cured: So in an infirmity or sickness of the soule, an upright heart complains to his Christian friends, I haue such an infirmity, what shall I doe to cure it? If they cannot help him, he runnes to him that hath the balme of Gilead, to Iesus Christ, & to haue it cured, the 2. Cor. 12. 3. 9. This was so in St. Paul, hee prayed three times that it might be removed: Hee doth not onely complain, as in the 7. of the Rom. 24. and desire that it may be healed, as in the forenamed place, where hee prays against it: But to this hee addes a serious endeavour, 1. Cor. 26. 27. *He beates downe his body*, &c. That is, he used all good meanes, for the overcoming of this infirmity: And where this complaint, desire, and endeavour is wanting, it is a signe it is not a mans infirmity, but iniquity.

5. *Signe*. Fifthly, if thy sinne bee a sinne of infirmity, thou shalt finde in thy selfe a con-
 tinuall reluctancy and strife against it: For as there is in thee a body of sinne; So also a body of grace, which being contrary to the other, will not suffer thee to bee at quiet; The Spirit will be against the Flesh, as well as the Flesh against the Spirit: And as the Flesh will not suffer thee to doe good duty without resisting, and interrupting thee; So neither will the Spirit suffer thee to sinne without striving against, and opposing it.

But if thou canst sit downe, and let it rest
 with.

without striving against it, it is no infirmity
but rebellion; Therefore try thy selfe by these
signes:

Objection 1. But others besides true Chri-
stians are able to doe this; For take an unreg-
enerate man, and he will make the same plea
for himselfe, that it is but an infirmity: Indeed
hee is overtaken sometimes, but it continues
not; And when he is admonished or reprov-
ed, hee findes his heart yeeld to it, and he grieves,
and is sorry for it; Hee complaines of it, and
seekes to helpe it, and strives against it; And
therefore these are not sure signes to distin-
guish him from another.

Ans. I answer, that there is something in
an unregenerate man which is much like, and
comes very neare to that in the regenerate
man, hee may doe much by that light hee hath,
but yet there is a broad difference betweene
them: For the regenerate man hath another
object about which he is conversant, he hath a
new light put into his heart, he is renued in
the Spirit of his minde, and *hee hath the Law
written in his heart*, 2. Cor. 3. 3, Heb. 8. 10. That
is, all the Spirituall duties that are written in
the Law; and hee hath something in his heart
that answers to what is in the Law, as *tally an-
swers to tally*; or that fashion in the lead,

to that in the mold : Or as in a seale character answers to character, impression to impression : So that which is in the Seale, the same is in the waxe : So whatsoever is in the Law of righteousness, if you could see that which is written in the heart by *Iesus Christ*, you should see character for character, print for print ; And so, that if there were not a written Law, hee would bee a Law unto himselfe to obey God, performe duties according to the Law written in his heart : Now when it stands thus with a man, and something, some impediment comes in the way, that hee cannot serve God as he would, the Law of his members rebelling against the Law of his mind, then this troubles and grieves him, this hee complains of, and strives against, and labours to have it mended.

Difference. But now a naturall man hath not the Law thus written in his heart, hee hath all things revealed to him within his sphere, to wit, of nature, he ascends no higher : and although hee hath good purposes & meanings, and grieves and complains, yet all this is for finnes committed against common light, against naturall conscience against the second Table. Now this is in a lower sphere, they are sorry, but not godly sorrowfull, they cannot grieve for omission of spirituall duties, required in the first Table, and so wee see, they are not pitcht on the same objects, which makes a greater difference.

Now for the further and fuller clearing of this point, wee will answer some questions or cases.

Quest.

Quest. 1. First, suppose I have striven long against such a lust, and done what I can, and yet cannot prevaile against it, shall I say that this is an infirmity?

Ans. To this I answer, first, that we may be, and are often deceived in this, when we have striven long against it (yet wee grow worse) and that the infirmity gets ground of us; for an infirmity may appeare to get strength, when as it loseth it. As when we cleanse a pond, it appeares more muddie than it was before, though in truth it loseth mud more and more. Every contrary, the more it is resisted, the more it appeares; as fire, the more cold is about it, the hotter it is: So an infirmity, the more it is resisted with the contrary grace, the more it appeares to prevaile, though in truth it loseth ground and strength.

2. And therefore secondly I give this rule, that though you have striven, yet you must not leave off, but continue your striving still, and yet bee content with Gods hand in suffering such an infirmity in you: for there is a double contentment, First, that which is opposed to murmuring against Gods hand, and impauiency, and so we must be content to suffer an infirmity on us: wee must not repine at Gods proceedings.

Secondly, such a contentment, as is opposed to striving against the infirmity, and so we must not be content to suffer it on us, but must strive constantly against it: As in a naturall disease wee are to labour to have it cured: But if God will have it lye upon us, wee must be content;

So here we should continually strive against our infirmities; But if God see good to let it rest upon us, wee must be content with his hand. For God doth it that wee might have something to humble us, and Humility is the Nurse of grace, without which, all grace would wither and decay.

And againe, the power of God rests and dwells in an upright heart, and that must have an empty place, And humility makes roome for this, when the power of God dwells in us, when it begins to settle in a mans heart; if hee now begin to grow up in conceit of himselfe, this expels the power of God, and crouds it out: And therefore God would have something to bee in us, to keep us in an humble condition.

It is with us as with *Paul*, when he looked on his infirmity; at the first hee was impatient, would have no denyall at Gods hand, but have it removed; Hee prayed thrice, that is, often, to this purpose. But when he saw it was a Medicine, which he thought a poyson, that it served to humble him, and by that meanes the power of God dwelt in him, then he was content, and so should we.

3. *Answer.* Againe thirdly, I answer, suppose you doe not get victory over your infirmity, and you be no better than you were before, nay lose ground of it, yet strive still, for this strife makes you hold head against it, which otherwise you would not doe: For if when you strive, you doe but keepe your ground, or lose somewhat, then what would become of you, if you did not strive

at all should you not goe quite down the streame and lose all? Yes certainly.

As a man that rowes against the streame, so long as he rowes, he does some good, loseth some ground, and getteth some. But if he leaves rowing, he goes quite downe the streame. And as a man may keepe the field against his enemy, though hee doe not conquer him, yea though hee loseth ground; Yet it is one thing to keepe the field, and another thing to bee beaten out, and overcome: now this continuall striving makes a man to keepe the field against his infirmity, & not to bee overcome, and therefore its worth the while to continue striving.

4. *Ans.* Lastly, I say, though a man is sure of victory, and that his cause is never so good, and that he goes on a good ground, yet GOD may in his wisdom so dispose of the matter, that he may lose the victory for a time; As we see the Israelites in a good cause were foiled twice by the *Benjamites*; and so the Disciples of CHRIST that were sent on his businesse to fish, they fished all night in vaine. And so *Moses*, though he went on Gods errand; yet he prevailed not a good while, but the people were oppressed more than before, *Exod. 5.*

And so *Paul*, though he was called to goe to *Macedonia*, yet see in the story what a many lets hee had, yet afterwards hee planted a Church there; so when wee strive against any sinnefull lust, our cause is good, and wee have a certaine promise, that wee shall overcome; Even as certaine a promise as *Iosuah* had, that he should

Drive out the Canaanites, and overcome them, when the Lord encouraged him, saying, *I will not faile thee nor forsake thee.* So sure a promise have wee in the first of Luke, ver. 74. *wee shall be delivered from all our enemies, that so we might serve God in holinesse:* And therefore be not discouraged, though thy infirmity hang long upon thee, but strive against it, and in the end thou shalt get the victory.

Question. 2. A second question is, whether an infirmity may hang on a man all his life, or no; For some Men may say, I have had a sinne which haunted mee all my life hitherto, and may doe till my dying day for ought as I doe know, and shall I then say this is an infirmity?

Ans. w. In this case wee must distinguish of infirmities, for infirmities are either occasionall, which are occasioned by some other accident, or habituall, which stay longer by a man, and these are either naturall to us, and so proceed either from our parents, and so are hereditary to us, even as some diseases are; And so we are subject to the very same infirmities that our parents are; Else they are such, as arise from the temper of our owne bodies.

Such as proceed from our naturall complexion, or else such as proceed from custome, which is another nature: Now, I say, that occasionall infirmities, such as arise from without, and such as come from Sathan, these continue but for a fit, and doe not last all our mans life, God doth usually set Sathan a limited time: Hee may give him

him liberty to tempt a man, but hee fets him his bounds, thus long hee must doe it, and no longer, usually I say, God doth thus; For hee may suffer him to doe it longer, but seldome all a mans life.

But now for our naturall hereditary infirmities, these may and doe often-times continue for tearme of life, for they have a roote in us. Now though you doe loppe off the branches, yet the roote will send forth more againe: I doe not say, that they so prevaile, as that they reigne in a man; For Grace will continually get ground against it: But it may remaine in a man so long as he lives, and GOD hath a good end in it; for hee would glorifie his Sonne in us, not onely at our first conversion, but all our life after; Hee would make us depend on CHRIST all-ways, as well for Sanctification, as for Iustification: Hee would make us see what neede wee have of a dayly Mediatour, and therefore leaves dayly infirmities in our Nature to exercise us with, and to caule us to looke up to Christ, as the *Braxen Serpent* was lift up amongst the *Israelites*.

Quest. 3. Another case may bee this, whether a sinne against knowledge, and with deliberation, may be said to be a sinne of infirmity, or no?

Answer. To this I answer, that a sinne committed simply with deliberation, cannot be an infirmity: That is, let a man be ever himselfe, without let or impediment, let him be his owne man, let the eye of his understanding be as when the Sunne shines, & dispels the mists, so that it

may see all before it : and let his will and affections walke at liberty : And in this case a good man cannot sinne deliberately. See the ground of this, *Romans* the seventh, and the seventeenth vers. *If I commit sinne, it is no more I, but sinne that dwelleth in me* : That is, when I am my self, my owne man, not bound up with any lust, I thus doe not sinne, it is not I ; But in this case, which is the usuall, and indeed all the case of Christians, namely, when any passion, or inordinate affection, or strong distemper doth either blind the eye of reason, or tye up his affection, so that hee is not at liberty, then he may commit a sin, having long deliberated on it.

There may be such distemper of affection as may continue long, and though it doe not wholly blind Reason, yet it blinds most of it. And this was the case of *David* in numbring the people he deliberated on it : *Ioab* tells him the truth, and reasoneth the case with him, and yet he did it. And so we know in murdering *Uriah*, it was consulted on, and a deliberate action, but there was much passion mingled with it ; *David* was not himselfe ; there was some strong affection that did binde and tye up the use of the regenerate part, as in drunkenness ; That excessse bindes up for a time the use of reason, so that he could not walke in the liberty of his Spirit, and therefore it was his infirmity ; We may see, that passion overcame *David* for the time, by his coming out of these finnes : For when after he came to himselfe, and saw the greatnesse of it, as usuall when a sinne is committed, (and not before) then we see the

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grievousnesse of it; Then *David* confessed hee had sinned, and done very foolishly.

So a Christian may fall into a course of worldly mindednesse, or the like, and this lust may hang upon a man, and yet be a sinne of infirmity : 1. When a man is himselfe, he sees it, and repents it.

Answer 2. Secondly, I answer, that in this deliberation, which is mingled with passion, there is a double error; Namely, when a man erres either about the ultimate and last end, or when he erres onely in the meanes. Now a regenerate man hath set up God for his last end, whom he must never forsake, nor part with for all the world, but in some particular thing he may erre: As when he thinkes he may doe such a thing, & yet keepe his God still, or else hee may get pardon of sinne quickly, or else minceth his sinne with distinctions, &c. and so may commit a sinne deliberately; For this is a true rule, that any sinne is a sinne of infirmity, so long as we doe erre about the last end, though in some particular wee are out, concerning the meanes and way to it.

But now an unregenerate man, hee deliberates after this manner: I would have God for my God, I would not be without God in the world, but there is such a pleasure, such a profit, which I must needs have, and rather than he will lose it, hee will part with God; Thus hee makes pleasure his uttermost end. A man loves his life, and loves the use of his members; as of his hand, his arme, or his legge, &c, But he rather lose his hand,

hand, or any of his members than his life. So a wicked man covets his pleasure more than his life, hee cannot live if hee have it not; And God hee esteemes but as one of his members, which hee would not willingly want: But a Christian hath God for his chiefe end, and never sins with deliberation, about this end: He will not forget God upon any termes, but may erre in the way, thinking hee may fulfill such a lust, and keepe GOD too.

Quest. 4. Another question is, whether a regenerate man may not fall into some presumptuous sins, and so commit a sin that is not of infirmity?

Ans. 1. For answer to this, we must know, that a presumptuous sinne is of two sorts: First, a sinne that is simply presumptuous, when wee know such a thing to be sinfull, and yet presuming on Gods mercy, wee will doe it; I say thus a godly man cannot sinne presumptuously.

2. But there is a sinne that is comparatively presumptuous; To wit, in comparison of our other finnes, which wee commit with more reluctancy, with more tenderesse of conscience: but some others we commit more against knowledge, and are more our selves when wee doe them; These are comparatively presumptuous sins, and a godly man may sometime commit them: As we see, it was *Dauids* case in the matter of *Vriah*, when hee plotted his death.

The end of the first Sermon.

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THE
SECOND
SERMON,
BY
JOHN PRESTON
Dr. of D.

Math. 12. 18. 19. 20.

18. Behold my servant whom I have chosen,
my beloved, in whom my soule is well
pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and hee
shall shew judgement to the Gentiles.

19. He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any
man heare his voice in the streets.

20. A bruised reed shall hee not breake; and
smoking flaxe shall hee not quench, til he send forth
Judgement unto victory.

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Have made choice of these words for the Affinity they have with that Text, whereof wee have solately spoken in this place, that out of this Text wee might prosecute the point already entred upon by occasion of the prayer of that good King in the former Text: for Christ is heere brought in shewing Iudgment to the Gentiles, and doing it in a meeke and tender manner, as *ver. 18, 19.* which manner is heere illustrated by the consideration of the persons to whom this Iudgment was declared, or shewed, who are here expressed under the similitudes of a bruised reed and smoking flaxe.

A Reed, the weakest plant, that is, not a strong Tree; Yet this a broken one, none of the strongest: So Flaxe, that takes the Fire a great deale sooner than a Reed will, especially if it be dry, and have hung neere the Fire, but most of all if it be already smoking, the least sparke will doe that; Yet Christ will not quench that little sparke.

Then he shewes the issue of this teaching, *till hee bring forth judgement into victory.* That is, untill that little sparke have got the mastery, or that hee may, &c. and so it is a reason of his
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tender dealing; Because otherwise, if roughly dealt withall; it never would prevaile: As a little coale, if it bee hard blowne; is soone extinguished; but if nourished, and gently dealt with, increaseth to a mighty flame: So the least grace, though as weake as a bruised, crushed seed, or as small as a sparke of fire; that onely makes the flaxe to smoake, yet if cherished by Christ, it will increase, and come at last to victory; So that in these verses yee have foure things.

First, the office of our Saviour *Iesus Christ*, which is, to teach men judgement.

Secondly, the manner how he doth it; Namely, with tendernes and meeknesse.

Thirdly, the persons; namely, such as are very weake in grace and holinesse.

Fourthly, the issue; namely, that *He will bring forth judgement into victory*. For the first and second of these.

Dott. 1. The office (I say) of Christ; is to teach men judgement, and this hee doth with much tendernes, compassion, & gentlenesse. For the former part, that Christs office is to shew men judgement.

1. First, to teach men the just and righteous wayes of God; So the word is taken in the old Testament, to enlighten men to judge of the

the wayes of God. There bee two ends why Christ came; First, to iustifie, and lecondly, sanctifie us, to give us forgivenesse of sinnes, *Act. last, 5 Act. 31.* therefore Christ is often compared to a shepheard; in the 10. of Saint *John*, (and many other places) that feeds his flocke, and he is also called *John. 1.9. The true light which enlighteneth the world, and every man that commeth into the world:* (That is) if Christ had not come into the world, there would not have beene one sparke of GODS image left in man, neither *Adam*, nor his posterity should have knowne any thing, but a cloud of darkenesse should have seized on mens minds. But now by *Christ*s comming every one, even the wicked have this benefit, that they have seene common light: *Christ* lightens every one that commeth into the world; in some sort teacheth them so much as shall make them inexcusable.

2. It is his office to teach men, and he doth it in the next place, with much gentlenes and tendernes: This we will easily grant, if we consider who it is that teacheth, and who we are that are taught, a rude people, so hard to conceive, so ready to forget. Therefore hee had neede have much gentlenes. We say when one quickly conceives a thing, and then goes
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to teach it to another that cannot apprehend it, it will weary him, if hee bee not very meeke. An angry man, when he findes any impediment, hee flyes on the face of it presently; and a proud man, he will not beare so much, nor waite so long. But now Christ is meeke, and thinkes not much to waite from day to day, to drop in here a line, and there a line, here a little, and there a little: Hee teacheth with much meeknesse; The reason is in the verse before; Christ deales with us according to his nature and disposition.

Now, as it is said before, hee shall not strive nor cry; when the Pharisees would have killed him, rather than he would strive with them, hee departed, yeelding to them, went his wayes from them.

And againe, it is said, neither shall his voice be heard in the streetes, alluding to an action of his, when he had wrought a great work, he bad them not utter the matter: He came not with pompe, and majesty, as great men, that cannot come in to a place, but the Towne must ring of them; He deterres no man by his greatnes, from comming unto him, but was of an humble and meeke disposition. And according as his Nature was, so hee dealt with us, teaching us with more tenderesse and meeknesse: Then there is no reason, why wee should bee discouraged for any of our infirmities, for Christ will beare with them. If he were not God, and man; That is, if hee were not patient in an infinite manner, hee could not beare with us: But hee is infinitely patient, therefore be not discouraged.

In *Ezekiel* 34. 16. ver. hee compares himselfe to a shepheard, and (saith hee) *I will seeke that which was lost, and bring againe that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen the weak:* where wee see, there bee foure causes of weaknesse.

Cause 4.

2. First, men are apt to straggle out of the way, through vanity and weaknesse of their owne spirits. Now when a man doth so weaken and lose himselfe, through his owne folly, then Christ seekes him, and will not suffer him to bee utterly lost.

David wandred as well as *Saul*, but God sought *David* againe, and would not lose him: Therefore we see, that *David* delights to use this Metaphor in *Psal.* 119. 176.

Againe, a temptation may come on a man which is too strong for him, and drive him out of the way; as sheepe when theeves come, are driven out of the fold, whether else they would not have gone: These Christ promisseth to bring backe againe: as *David* recovered the sheepe out of the paw of the Lion and Beare, so Christ will recover his children that were carried away with such strong temptations.

Againe,

Againe, suppose there be some wound made in the soule by some actuall sinne, if there bee some breach made into the conscience, Christ promisseth in the next place to make up this breach, that hee will binde up that which was broken: a man may complaine that he is weak, and ready to straggle as before: Therefore Christ promisseth to strengthen that which is weake, that is, he will lead them on to a greater measure of strength dayly, whereby they shall be able to get victory over such infirmities: *Isaiab 40. 11* He shall feede his flocke like a shepheard, hee shall gather the Lamber with his arme, and shall carry them in his bosome, and shall guide them with young: Here we see, that in the fold of Christ there is this difference of sheepe.

Some are strong that can goe a pace; Some are weaker, that cannot keepe pace with the other, and they are compared to the Ewes with young, that can goe but a slow pace; Some are so weake, that they must be carried, else they cannot goe. Now, those that are so weake, that they cannot comprehend Christ, hee is ready to comprehend them: when men are weake, and have not that use of their faith which others have, to lay hold on Christ; Christ will take hold on them, and carry them in his

belomb; and those that are weake, and cannot keepe pace with others, hee will guide them, and drive them on, according to their pace, & he will drive on the strong according to their strength; and though hee beare with the weake, he expects more from the strong: See how *Iacob* ordered his flocke in that manner that he would not out-drive them; and shall not God doe so also, who hath taught the Husbandman this discretion, *Isaiah 28.* use it himselfe? Surely, he will: in the 1. of *Saint Iam.* ver. 5. *If any man lacke wisdome, let him aske it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraiderh none, and it shall be given unto him:* That is, you shall finde this difference betwene God and man.

If one be foolish, and goes to man, man is ready to despise him, and laugh at him: But if he aske wisdome at Gods hands, he gives it to him liberally, and twits him not with his folly, upbraides him nor with his weaknesse: Looke how a tender Mother deales with her Child, the more its weaknesse is, the more tender shee is of it; So doth Christ guide us according to our weaknesse, and tender us the more, because wee are meeke and humble: and therefore wee have no cause to bee discouraged, for that weaknesse which we finde in our selves.

Wee are indeed exceeding backward to beleeve this, and therefore see what's added: *Ezek. 34. 16.* *Hee saith hee will feede them with judgement:* That is, with wisdome and discretion.

tion : For hee is wise, and knowes how to feede them, according to their weake capacities, and so his Wisedome may bee a ground that he will tender us.

Againe, his power may shew that hee will doe this with us, because hee is able to make crooked things streight : If a man meete with a crooked piece of wood, which hee would streighten for his use, and cannot ; Hee throwes it away, because hee cannot make it streight.

Men if they are to deale with a Scholler that is heard to learne, they give him over, because hee is incapable : They cannot make him conceive instructions. But Christ is able to make crooked wayes streight, to quicken those that are dull, to put new natures into us ; and therefore hee will not deale so harshly with us.

Againe, if there be any grace in us, it is his owne worke, and therefore it is for his credit to perfect it, *1. Thes. 5. 24. vers. Phil. 1. 6.* he should not be faithfull else, if hee should not doe it. But hee will doe it : as a work-man loves his owne workes, and will not leave them unperfect, so neither will Christ.

Againe, it is his Fathers will, that those who are weake, should be cherished, his delight is still in leading them from one degree of strength to another, for his power is more seene in them, and hee hath more thanks from them, as hee had from *Mary Magdalen*.

Object. But some will say, oh but my heart is so untoward, that I feare I never shall overcome?

Answer. Consider well that place the 22 of Esay 1, 6. vers. Thus saith the Lord, He created the Heavens, and stretched them out; He hath spread forth the Earth, and that which connecteth one of it; Hee that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walke therein: If the Lord have called thee, &c. Consider who it is that created the Heavens, the Earth, and the buds thereof; That giveth breath, &c. is it not God? Now then suppose he findeth nothing in the nature of man, but an emptines of grace and holines; Js not hee that made the Heavens when there was none before? And then is not hee able to create grace in a mans heart?

Againe, looke on the Earth in the Winter, it is very hard; a man would thinke it should never bring forth flowers, yet in the Spring it puts forth many kinde of fruites and flowers: So though thy heart be as Hearbs in the Winter, yet God is able to make grace sprout forth there, as flowers in the Spring; Besides, it is he that giveth breath unto the people; That is, if you looke upon all the World, yet none was able to put life in them, but GOD. So though your soules be like unto a clod of earth; Hee is able to put life into them, the breath of life, as he did at the first, he is able to

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enlighten and enlarge them further, and therefore bee not discouraged for thy weaknesse.

1. *Vse.* Is it thus? That Christ teacheth in judgement, and that with much compassion and tenderneſſe? Then this ſhould incourage men to come unto Chriſt, to learne of him, to take this yoke on them: This uſe we finde to be made of this Doctrine in the 11. of St. Mar. 28. 29. and 30. verſes. *Come unto mee all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will eaſe you: Take my yoke on you, and learne of me, and you ſhall finde reſt to your ſoules: For my yoke is eaſe, and my burden is light:* That is, let a man look upon Chriſt & his wayes, and uſually they are discouraged with the ſtrictneſſe of religion; they thinke they ſhall bee too ſtraight laced, & bound with fetters that are too ſtraight for them. No (ſaith Chriſt) fear not, for I am meeke and lowly, and ſuch ſhal you finde my dealings to be towards you.

There be two things in the Text to move us to come in to Chriſt, and to be ſubject to his yoke.

1. Firſt, the nature of the thing it ſelfe, it is an eaſie yoke: Before you come to me, you are like men in priſon; But when you come to me, I looſen you, and ſet you at liberty;

Before you were as in darknesse, but when you come to me, I enlighten you: before you were as men in sicknesse, but when you come to me, I strengthen and heale you.

2. A second thing, is from the person you have to deale with, that is, Christ: *Come unto mee, for I am exceeding gentle, and meeke*, and such shall you finde mee: *John Baptist* and *Moses* came roughly, but Christ is come in tenderneffe; if you be subject to infirmities, hee is ready to passe them by; if you bee overcome with them, hee is ready to recover you; and therefore now come in to Christ; Submit yourselves to his yoke, to his teaching and discipline, to his rule and government which is so easie. But if you will not, he will rule you with a rod of Iron, and breake you in peeces like a Potters vessell; If you stand out with him, then none is so rough as hee, and therefore observe him.

If a King should say at his Coronation, he would open all the prison-doores, would not offenders take that opportunity? Or if a Creditor should say to his debtors, come to me at such a time, and I will forgive you and your debts, and give you in your bonds: would the debtor overslippe that time?

So let us, when Christ offers to himselfe to teach us with such tenderneffe; goe to him, take that time

time especially; Considering that these are such times as are in Gods owne power; Those things that are in our owne power, we may doe what we will with, and take our owne time; but these times are not in our hands, but in Gods; and therefore take heede of over-slipping that time, when Christ carries himse-lfe as a Nurse unto us: There is a time for every purpose, and that last but for a season, *Eccles. 3. 11. 12.* There is a certaine season which God hath appointed for every purpose, there is a time when the businesse may bee well done, and if that be let slippe, it will not succcede, but hee will be snared in an evill time, because hee knoweth not the good time.

Therefore when it is past, his misery is great. So chiefly there is a time of receiving grace, but this time a man knowes not, yet he is undone if he passe it; Therefore take heed of over-slipping any offer of grace: procrattination in all things is dangerous, but here especially.

Now, that which deceives us, is the deferring: But we must not deferre one day, and say, then wee shall doe it another; No, for then we shall let the time be past as in a chariot, the wheelles runne neere one another, but they never overtake one another,

And as in a Clocke the minutes are but little distant one from another, yet none of them are together: So the devill by his cunning thinkes to make you doe it now, and by and by, till he have made you passe your houre: Therefore take heed of deferring, and come in, whilst Christ dorth expresse himse-lfe thus unto you in these tearmes,

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whiles he deales thus tenderly and gently with you.

It is a very dangerous thing to lose the opportunity of receiving *Christ*, when hee offers himselfe, when hee deales gently, which wee gather from that place, thus; if there be a time for every purpose, then certainly there is a time for the greatest businesse that a man hath to doe on the Earth, that is, to come in to *Christ*, and receive him; And if the misery of man be great upon him, if hee let slip other seasons, much more if he neglect this; But now there is a time for every purpose, as these places testifie.

And to instance in some few, *Gehezi* tooke a gift of *Naaman*, *2. Kings 5.* saith *Elisba* to him, *was this a time to take gifts?* There was a time when thou mightest have done it at another time, of another person thou mightest, but this was not a time; For *Naaman* was a stranger, and did not know the customes, and *Elisba* would give him his health freely, and therefore it was not the time; and therefore we see the misery was great, the leprosie clave to him and his posterity; because hee knew not the time; So *Saul* because hee sacrificed before *Samuel* came, the thing hee did was good, but hee tooke not the right time; Hee was too hasty, he knew not his time; and so his misery was great upon him; God tooke the Kingdom from him, and gave it to his neighbour, *1 Sam. 13. 13. 14.*

So *Jacob*, when he sought the blessing, hee thought hee did a good thing, but hee did not stay the time, so the misery was great upon him;

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See what a long peregrination, what a hard service hee did undergoe under his uncle *Laban*, and all because hee knew not the right time. So the *Israelites* when they sought a King, if they had stayed their due time, God would in his due time have revealed unto them, that *David* should bee their King, for he had so appoynted it; And therefore because they missed of the time, thier misery was great on them; so likewise for other purposes, so for this; there is a time for a man to come in, and take the offer that *Christ* makes, a time when he is kind and gentle, and ready to receive us; if we know not this time, and so overship it, our misery will bee great upon us. Now then it is very requisite to know and finde out this time, because if wee choose Gods time, God will joyne with us in the worke, and so it will bee done with ease, *Eccles. 3. 9. 10.* *A time to love, &c. what profit hath he that worketh, in that wherein he laboureth? I have seen the travell which God hath given to the Sonnes of men, to be exercised in it.* (That is) men take much travell and paines to bring their purposes and ends to passe; When they doe not take Gods time, and what profit have they by it?

Now, if you will open when *Christ* knockes at the doore, harken to the motions of the Spirit, & blow them, and nourish them, and it will be done with much ease; But if you misse this time, your misery is great; You may desire, and crye, and pray, and never the better; *Eccles. 9. 13.* *For a man knoweth not his time; As the fish is,*
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that is taken in an evill net, and as the birds that are caught in a snare ; so are the Sonnes of men snared in an evill time ; when it falleth suddenly upon them.

There is a double time , as wee may gather out of these words ; a good and acceptable time, so called , because God is then ready to accept and receive us, if we come in that time : And if we doe not make use and embrace that good & acceptable time, then the evill time shall fall upon us ; wee shall be caught in an evill net and snare : There may be a good net come on us , as affliction, sicknesse, and the like, may come upon us, so as to doe us good ; as we catch at some things to preserve them alive for a better condition than they were in ; But now, if wee overslippe time, than the evill net shall upon us ; sicknesse , death , and destruction shall come on us suddenly as a snare : That wee may see the ground of this , see what Christ sayes, *Luke 19, 42. 43. If thou hadst knowne, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes :* Hee speakes it to the *Jewes*, who yet enjoyed the ministry of Christ, and he tels them that the time of their visitation was past.

So that a man may have the liberty to live under the ministry , long after that God hath rejected him ; Christ came then and visited the *Jewes*, and all profited nothing ; Then they were like the Figge-tree that Christ cursed, after their day was passed ; and this day may be long before

fore a mans death, he may live long rejected: and Therefore let us take heed we doe not stand out our time.

In outward things we are wont to anticipate & prevent time: So *Jacob* got the blessing before the time: And the *Israelites* sought for a King before the time; And so men would be hastily rich; And so for pleasure, if vve should stay Gods time, to take it after labour, we should doe well, but wee prevent our time here; But in spirituall things wee are to slow, let slip our time, to come after; But this is dangerous, take heede of it: It's a good note which the *Stoicks* have; Some things are in our owne power, and in them wee may use our owne liberty; But other things are in the power of others, and then wee must take the opportunity while it's offred; Wee must faile when the winde blowes.

Now of this latter kinde are spirituall things, and therefore wee must take the time that's offred; Indeed, if the time were in our owne power, or if we knew the time, then wee might delay; *Acts* 1. 11. It is not for us to know the times vvhich the Father hath kept for his owne power, and no man knoweth what shall bee, neither can any tell it him, and therefore take heede of letting slippe the time: *Sathan* deceives us in this, just as the *Lapwing* doth, when a man is neare her nest, shee flyeth a little before a man, and then lighteth, and flyeth a little further, till it hath led as quire out of the way,

Sathan

So Satan makes us deferre a little longer, & a little longer, till our time bee past; and therefore deferre now no longer, but come in unto Christ whiles hee Offers himselfe in a loving and tender manner; And so much for the Office of Christ, which is to teach, and his manner of teaching, with much meekenesse and gentlenesse.

Now followes the third thing to be considered, and that is the persons that Christ hath to deale with such as are very meake, compared here to a bruised reed, and a smoaking flaxe. A reed is of it selfe very weake, and shaken with every winde, and not onely so, but broken with the least force. So a Christian may be subject to much unevenesse and inconstancy in his wayes, shaken with every temptation; But when this shall bee a broken reed, this is a further degree of weaknesse; And so for smoaking flaxe, it must bee an exceeding little sparke which will not cause flaxe to smoake, & yet with such weake ones hath Christ to deale. He will not breake the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flaxe.

Now, from the persons that Christ teacheth, that is, weake ones, observe this point.

That there may bee exceeding great weaknesse in true Christians; Wee see in the Text they are compared to the weakest things, a bruised reed and smoaking flaxe; The first reason of it is this.

Reas. 1. Because it pleaseth Christ in working grace, to doe it by degrees; He might have perfected the worke of grace altogether, as he did

in the worke of creation in an instant ; But hee dealeth with us now according to the course of generation ; As a plant is first sowne, then riseth by degrees ; So we in the beginning of grace are exceeding small ; Hee heales us as hee did the blinde man , not altogether , but by little and little.

First, we see more darkely and confusedly, and then more cleerely, and hee heales our lamnesse, not altogether by setting us on our feete at the first, but hee gives us strength by degrees ; First, to goe on crouches, as it were , or to creepe or step forward, and afterwards to goe more strongly ; And hence it is that there are many weake, because grace is but weakly wrought in them.

Now, the reason why *Christ* doth thus lead us on by degrees , is first to humble us, and to let us see that the worke is not of our selves ; it is God that *workes* in us according to his good pleasure ; for when we are brought on by degrees thus , it makes it evident unto us , that wee receive strength from another.

Secondly, hee doth it for his owne glory , that wee might know the righteousnesse of *Christ* : in the 8. of *Deut.* 2. 17. there is set downe these 2. ends, why the Lord led them through the Wildernesse, and not the nearest way.

First, Gods end in it was to humble them,

Secondly, to let them know that hee did it for his owne sake ; So he doth here to humble them, and for his owne glory ; God doth not perfect grace at the first, but by degrees, & likewise that they may know his power , that it is his strength
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in which they walke, that if a Christian should be left to himselfe, hee would quickly finde that it is Christs power that he must walke in, that must goe along with him to guide him, and to deliver him from his enemies.

Use. Now, for the use of this, it may serve to comfort weake Christians; What though thou art not at that growth as other Christians are? Yet bee of good comfort; a reed hath life in it as well as the strongest oake; What though thou canst not see the flame of an holy conversation, but only the fume; Yet you may know there is fire; Men that are in the covenant, are like men that are gone in at a doore, or into a Church, or the like: Some are further in than others, but yet all are in; So though the weake be not so forward as another, yet he may be in, though not so farre in; for a budd drawes sappe from the roote, as well as the fruit, why so thou must be a budd, and have grace in some measure, though not in so great a measure, yet thou maist bee a true Christian, though a weake Christian.

Objection. But you will say, that it is a hard thing to be perswaded, that God will accept of such a weakling as I am.

Answe. Therefore consider the nature of Christ, for we are deceived in that as in other things: In the the 2. of the Heb. vers. 17. *We see that it behoved Christ in all things to be made like unto his Brethren; that hee might be a mercifull and faithfull High Priest, &c.*

Christ

Christ is our High-Priest; now there are three Offices of our High-Priest:

First, hee was to receive every sacrifice.

Secondly; to offer sacrifice daily.

Thirdly, to lay the wood together, & preserve the Fire.

Now then, it belongs to Christ, to receive every sinner that comes to him, as it did to Aaron, to receive the sacrifice; And if Christ should not doe all that belongs to his office, he should be an unfaithfull High-Priest: But he is called a faithfull High-Priest: If then a sinner come to Christ, and saith, Lord, I know that God is a consuming fire, and I dare not come to him in my selfe, but in the merit of that Sacrifice which thou offeredst, Christ cannot reject him; But sayes hee to him, *Come unto mee, and I will receive you.* If they doe but come, hee cannot but receive them, else hee should bee unfaithfull in his office; and in his promise: But hee is faithfull in both, and not onely so, but hee is a mercifull High-Priest, and so will pittie them that come unto him: And if you have many sinnes daily renewed, many infirmities and imperfections, why, it is Christs office to renew the sacrifice daily; He offers up a daily sacrifice for us, even his owne righteousness; And as he doth this for justification, so for sanctification also. When Sacrifice was laid on the Altar, the Priests could not bring fire from Heaven to consume it, but God sent it, & so shewd that it was accepted: we may lay the wood together, but cannot bring fire from heaven; But Christ is a Priest of an higher order thā was Aaron.

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Hee will kindle this fire of Sanctification, and encrease it, and keepe it still burning; It's his office so to doe: And therefore doubt not but Christ will receive you.

Objection. Oh, but this were some comfort, if I had assurance that I had but one spark of true grace in me: Therefore how shall I know that?

I answer, there be five signes laid downe in the Text, whereby a man may come to know this:

1. First, in these words; *Hee will bring forth Judgement into victory*: That is, the first thing that Christ doth, even to set up a right Iudgement in thee: When the Apostle prays for the *Philippians*, hee prays, *That they may abound in knowledge and Iudgement.*

2. Seondly, there is life in a bruised Reede, as in the strongest Oake.

3. Thirdly, there is fire, though never so small, as in the strongest Oake.

4. Fourthly, there is a Combate.

5. Fifthly, there is victory.

1. Now, for the first of these, consider whether Christ hath set up his judgement in thee: when the Apostle prays that the *Philippians* may abound in Knowledge, and in Iudgement.

Judgement: That is, that they may discern of things that differ, and hee takes it for granted that it was right, else hee would not pray for the encrease of it.

So that when a man can discern of things that differ, when hee can put a difference betweene the wayes of God, and sinne, betweene Spirituall Priviledges, and outward vanities, betweene truth and falshood; Then there is a light come into a man, and this makes them pure and blamelesse, fills them with the fruites of righteousness: Now then, if thou hast this in any degree, thou hast the Spirit of Christ: As it was in *Esay. 11. 2. 3.* *Hee had the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the feare of the Lord.* So is it in all his members, they have the same Spirit, and doe not judge according to the sight of the eye, or the hearing of the eare, but judge righteously: for there is a two-fold judging: first, when our eye or eare judge, and wee judge according to that, when wee send out our spirits, and heare what they report; and this is ready to bring in a false report, to say that sinne is sweete and pleasant and it will represent grace as vile, because it judgeth according to outward appearance; And the outside of Christianity is base, in regard of

misreports, that are brought up of it: As the
venne messengers brought an evill report up-
on the Land of *Canaan*; And in regard of
the outside of it in those that professe it, who
are many times poore and contemptible men,
and in regard of the infirmities and failings
of the Saints.

Now, if a man judge by the eye, that sees
nothing but the outside, hee will esteeme of
religion as base. But it is otherwise when a
man hath the Spirit of judgement, hee will
looke further into things, he pries into the in-
side, and then hee will not judge of the wayes
of God, and of sinne as the world doth; But
will see a basenesse in sinne, and an excellency
in Religion, because he is enabled to judge a-
right.

For Christ, as hee makes his Princes and
Priests, so hee makes them Prophets like-
wise, to judge and discern of things aright,
and this hee doth by opening the eyes, *Acts*
26. 18. That is, good things in themselves
are very excellent, and desiraeable, but we see
them not till our eyes are opened; There is a
vaile drawne over our eyes till Christ re-
moves it, and opens them.

Question. VVhat is that?

Answer.

Answer. Why, Christ he elevates and raiseth up that light which we have, unto an higher degree, and that is by putting a new light into their soule, *Iohn 1, 9.* that is, the true light, which lightned every one that commeth into the World.

Before the Creation was compleate, there was some light; The first day after the Sunne was created, and after the fall hee enlightened every one that came into the World; (that is) all men have some light or other by Iesus Christ; Before there was no sparke of light in us, but all that wee have is by Christ; That glimmering light which is in naturall men, is but a sparke of the new Image, which Christ hath put on us: But in this, Christ raiseth up the light higher and higher; And when this new light is put in us, then a mans eyes are said to be opened, when he can see round about him, and discern that excellency in grace, and that baseness in sinne, which were in them before, but they could not see it. As the Chariots and Horsemen were with *Gehazi*, but his eyes were not opened to see them: And so the Well was neare *Hagar*, but shee saw it not till God had opened her eyes, and shewed it unto her.

So death and destruction may be very neere an unregenerate man; and hee not see it till God opens his eyes: So also a Christian may have ground of comfort, and hee not know it, till God sheweth it unto him; now where a mans eyes are opened, that hee can see thus round about him; then hath Christ set up this judgement in a man.

But here now all the businesse will bee to discern betweene the common judgement of a man, and this right judgement which Christ sets up in him, which difference is seene by these particulars.

1. First, they differ in the authours of them: Another mans judgement is borne and bred within him; But this comes from above from God; It is a new judgement, yea, a renewed judgement, *Ephes. 4. 23. Be ye renewed in your spirits and mindes*: When thou hast such a judgement of sinne & godlinesse, which thou hadst not before; This is a new judgement.

2. Secondly, they differ in regard of the subject: This new light is alwayes in a pure heart; the other not; So long as the heart is overwhelmed with lusts, so long the eye of the Soule is dimme, as in a mist, that wee cannot see before us; But Christ takes away this mist: *Titus 2. 11. 12. 13. 14. When the grace of God hath appeared, &c.* Then wee see cleerely: ~~Where~~ ^{Whereas} the unregenerate man never judgeth aright of an holy way; because his heart is full of lusts, which are as mists, that they cannot see.

3. Thirdly, they differ in the measure. Common light will perswade you of common truth or of truths in generall, that such and such things

things are commendable ; But if you come to a particular action, and practise that, you must doe this, and this, here it sayles him : But this right judgement helps a man to doe particular actions ; It enlightens him in every particular ; Takes away all objections, and guides you in the right way : *2. Tim. 2. 7. Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things :* (that is) I have told thee these things in generall, but when you come to particular, the Lord must direct you.

4. Fourthly, they differ in the growth: This right judgement growes more and more, it is as the light that shines clearer and clearer, till it be perfect day : *Esay. 42. 3. 4. Hee shall bring forth judgement unto truth :* When this judgement is put into a man, every thing adds something to it ; A good heart makes use of every thing, but another man that hath but a common sight, doth not grow, but is apt to be offended ; And at length that light that he hath turnes into injudiciousnes of minde, you shall finde it decrease more and more, *2. Tim. 3. 13. Evil men, waxe worse and worse ;* for that light of theirs is but like a flower, which, when it is at the best, fades and decays ; And the reason of it is, because God giveth a man leave to use that commō wisdom that he hath for a time :

But when they doe not improve that knowledge that they have, then God takes it away from them & turnes it into foolishnesse, as wee may see *Rom. 1.25. Because they chāged the truth of God into a lie* therefore they were given up to vile affections: *1 Cor. 1.19. God will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nought the understanding of the prudent.*

5. Fifthly, they differ in the effects which they produce; for first, this right judgment brings forth poverty of spirit, whē as before a man thought he had some good things in him, now he sees he is nothing.

o Saving wisdom makes him see himselfe empty of all that was good, makes him see that before hee knew nothing, as he ought to know; but now cōmon judgement breeds pride, it puffes a man up; *1 Cor. 8. 1.2.* & makes him preferre himselfe before his brethren.

2. Secondly, this right judgment, it causeth a man to know every thing; as they ought to know it, when hee knowes a right use of it.

As for example, a man that knowes his ground which hee owes, when hee knowes what graine it will best beare, what tillage and manure is best for it; Then a man knowes his roole as he ought, when he knowes how to use it as hee ought.

So a man that knows sinne as he ought when he looks upō it so, as to lose it, & loath it, then knows he the promises as he ought, when he makes that use

use of them as he should make ; when as other men minde them no more than their old shooes ; and then we know forgiveness of sinnes as we ought ; when wee think it the most precious thing in the world : and so if wee knew earthly vanities as we ought, wee would weane our selves from them, yea frō all worldly things : as the lusts of the flesh, & pleasure, the lust of the eye, & riches, honour, and pride of life , or any other excellency in the world , be it what it can be , wee will not then endure it.

Now when a mans eyes are opened, & he is savingly enlightned , and knowes these things he ought, then he lookes on carnall pleasures, & sees they will bring bitterness in the end : when hee lookes upon riches , hee sees that to be true which is said of them : Why wilt thou set thy heart upon them , which are as nothing ? Hee sees they are uncertaine , insufficient , and not able to satisfie his soule : And for the pride of life, or any excellency which before he greatly prized, now he accounts it vile and contemptible , this the spirit of right judgment enables a man to doe.

3. Thirdly the singleness of the eye is another effect of this, it teacheth a man to looke on things with a single eye: *Matth. 6, 22, 23.* There is mention made of a single eye, and of an evill eye: if a man hath a single eye, hee will not looke on God and on the World , but on God alone , cleave to him , and serve him alone ; the other is called a wicked eye , because there be many lusts on which it looks.

But this right judgement makes us looke on God singly, abstracted from all other things.

4. A fourth effect which this right judgement pronounceth, is, Conversion of the whole man unto God, *if thine eye be single, thy whole body is full of light*, (that is,) I shall bee set straight; And when this is not done, it hinders our conversion unto God, as we may see in the 13. of *Math. 15.* we cannot looke on other things, and turne our eyes upon God at the same time.

5. Fiftly, this right judgement it sets up, and makes a man willing to bee guided by the word of God, by the Ministers, or any servant of God; a Child may lead him, the weakest Christian may lead him, if they bring Spirituall reason, as naturall men are led by reason, so these by the Word of God.

6. Sixtly, it makes a man able to practise that hee knowes, whereas another man knowes much practiseth little; But this Iudgement brings forth practice, this knowledge will lead us into action; 1. And so much for the first signe, whereby wee may know whether Christ hath wrought any sparke of grace in us, namely, if hee hath set up his Iudgement in our hearts.

2. Now, for the second, this is such a Iudgement as begets life: A Reede hath Life as well as an Oake: Now, if you would know if this Life be right, or no, you shall know it by the heare, there is fire; So if we would know if this be right, see it by the combate; If you would know if that be right, try it by the victory: Well then, now we have to speake of the second signe.

2. Con-

2. Consider though you be weake, whether you are not as a bruised reed, yea, or no, which hath some life, some strength in it. *A bruised Reed will bee not breake*; Here vvee vwill consider three things.

1. First, that there must bee some strength and life in the vveakest.

2. Secondly, this strength is subject unto bruising, *A bruised Reed, &c.*

3. Thirdly, that Christ vwill heale all these bruises; Hee vwill not breake the bruised Reed, but vwill bring forth Iudgement into victory.

For the first of these, there must bee a Reed which hath some life in it: Now, life is such a faculty, vvhereby Creatures move themselves in their ovvne places, so say Philosophers: Other things that have not life, may moove themselves vvhen they are out of their ovvne places: As a stone, vvhen it is out of its ovvne place, moves dovvnevwards; And fire here below, being out of its place, moves uppvards; But nothing can move it selfe in its place, but that vvch hath life in it.

To apply this to our purpose, vvhosoever moves himselfe in the vvayes of God, hath life in him; There bee many things may move us towards God, as good education, a poverfull ministry, good company, and the like; As *Ioash* and *Amaziah* vvvere good vvwhile their good friends lived; But all this doth not argue life in us, because they are but extrinsecall causes; As a hand may make a stone move uppvards, the stone hath not life therefore; but vvhen a man is so farre enlightened,

ned, so fashioned and formed by Iesus Christ, that he judgeth aright of the wayes of God, and being thus formed, hee moves himselfe to doe good; then hee is said to be alive, when Christ I shall set up Iudgement in the heart of man, to see the evill of the wayes of sinne, and the good that is in the wayes of God, even then, he moves towards those wayes naturally and willingly, such a one hath life in him: Let some consider this, that live in the Church under good Tutors, or Masters, or Parents, that are carryed on in a crowd of good Company; They may doe much and yet have no life, because it may proceede from an outward cause; Not from an outward perswasion of the heart, of the goodnesse of the wayes wherein they walke.

There is a two-fold perswasion: One is, that the wayes of God are good; a bare perswasion onely, and yet this stirres not men up to walke in these wayes; but it lyes dead in the heart.

2. But there is another perswasion which is ingrafted in the heart, that moves a man to new obedience: 1. *Iames 21. 22.* So wee shall finde there a double exprestion of light: One, which barely shewes men all evill and good; But there is another light with life, *Iohn 8. 12.* *Hee that followeth me, shall have the light of life:* It is an *Hebraisme*, hee shall have the light of life; That is, the lively light: *Ephes. 5. 14.* *Awake from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

1. The first difference betweene them, is, the one reveales the wayes of God, but so, that the affections are not mooved, the hands are

are not set on worke.

2. But the other is, when that the wayes of God are so revealed, that wee see an amability; an excellency in them; And so, that wee lift up our hearts unto the wayes of the Lord, as before we did unto vanity; (That is) wee desire earnestly to walke in them.

Consider How you lifted up your hearts to riches, pleasures, and other Earthly vanities; If now you so lift up your hearts to walke in his wayes, then here is that inward perswasion, that lively light wrought in you; That life whereof we speake: This life is nothing else, but that which the Scripture calleth faith.

Now, there is a dead faith spoken of, and how shall wee know it to bee dead?

Thus, when it stirs us not up to good workes: And how shall wee know it is living? When it moves us vvolingly and readily to duties of obedience; Christ dwels in the heart by faith: So saith Saint Paul. *The life I now live is by faith in the Sonne of God*, Gal. 2. 20. (that is) there are two men that looke on Christ; One lookes on him, beleeves all the promites, all threatnings, all his word, opens his heart, and lets Christ come in, and rule, and doe there what he list.

Another faith (if you aske him) that he beleeves all this; but vvee shall knowv it by this, because it doth not make him move forward unto new obedience: Novv according to our life that is in us, so is our strength; The lesse life, the lesse strength, Revelations 3. 8.

The

The Church of Philadelphia is said to have a little strength: Now if you would know whether you have true strength or no; you must distinguish between life and strength, to wit, the least degree of strength will first enable a man to do all things in some measure; Though not in that measure you should; it will enable you to love God, To beleeve, to pray, &c. you can do something of every thing. *Phil. 4. 13. I can doe all things through Christ that strengtheneth mee.*

2. Secondly, though it doe not reach the highest degree, yet it aimes at it, and hath a desire to it: After he had said (*Phil. 3. 14 15.*) he had not yet attain'd to perfection, but aimed at it, made forward toward it; He addes, let as many as be perfect be thus minded: the least spark of fire will endeavour to rise above the Aire, as well as the greatest, and where true strength is, it will endeavour to be stronger.

3. Thirdly, this is not an empty levelling at it, but it grows up to it; so doth not other common strength, there is a strength in iron to resist violent strokes, and in a rocke to resist the force of the waves, but this is not a vitall strength, so in other men there may be of resolution, but it is not a selfe-moving strength, and therefore it continues as it was, and growes not, but in vitall strength there is a period to which it growes, and never rests till it comes up to it, as we see in plants and other living Creatures, and men, they grow up to their full strength; So Christians have their period which they grow up to, and this period is perfect holines, which they cannot attaine to in this

this life ; And therefore they are still growing so long as they live.

Now then, see if you have such a strength ; and if you can finde that you have , then there is life in you ; And that is the first that wee propounded to shew , that there must bee some life , some strength.

2. The second thing was that this strength is subject to much bruising, *A brased Reed will bee not breake : A weake Christian*, though hee have not the strength of a man , yet he hath the strength of a Child ; Though not the strength of Tree, yet of a plant ; And such strength is subject to bruising, and the lesse strength, the more subject it is to bruising, as we see in plants.

Now, bruising is of two sorts , and both arising from sinne.

1. The first arise from sin , as it is unpardoned : (That is) as you apprehend sinne to be unpardoned, the more ready you are to be bruised.

2. The second sort ariseth from sinne as it is unmortified ; vwhen a man sees still that sine grooves up, vvhich he had thought he had cut dovyne he is ready to be bruised : The former sort is contrary to the grace of justification, the latter to that of sanctification ; novv *Christ* hath promised to heale these bruises, vvhich is the third thing to be considered.

3. Let those therefore that are thus vveake, consider this promise here, that *Christ* vwill heale all these bruising, & so all other , the promise for this purpose that hee vwill heale these bruising, which arise from our doubting of justification,

Esay

Esay 61, 1. 2. 3. 4. *vers.* thā is the bruising for which Christ came into the world to preach glad tidings to the weake, and to binde up the broken hearted, to proclaime liberty to the captives. Therefore if a poore soule would goe to Christ, & say thus; Lord, I am bound with the chain of my sins, and thou camest to set such at liberty; Christ hee would doe it; for he was anoynted for that very purpose.

2. And so for the bruising that arise from sinne unmortified, why Christ hath not promised not to leave thee to thy selfe, nor forsake thee, but will destroy all the workes of the devill in thee; therefore goe to Christ, and put him in minde of this promise, & say, Lord, I am one of them, to whom this promise is made; I am as a bruised reed, and as smoaking flaxe; and thou hast promised, not to breake a bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flaxe; Put Christ thus in minde of his promise, and he will heare, and help, and heale thee.

But now here are some cases of conscience to be resolved.

Quest. 1. First, some will bee ready to say that they have none of these bruises, that they are not thus weary, and heavy laden, because they cannot grieve for sinne, so much as for other things.

1. Answer. To which I answer, there may be some violent and sudden grieve, which may exceede grieve for sinne, as *David's* grieve for *Abalom*; But here is the difference; the grieve for sinne is constant and perpetuall, but the grieve for

some losse, or the like, is but for the present. Now a spring that runnes, and is never dry, yeelds more water than a Land flood, which for the present seemes greater, but is soone dried up: So griefe for sinne, is like water that runnes from a spring, which continues; and griefe for other things, is like a Land-flood which lasts not long.

Again, they differ in regard of the tearmes of this sorrow: When a man hath lost a friend, he lookes on it as a totall and irreparable losse, and so grieves the more, and so in like manner, if wee should looke on the favour of God, as a thing irrevocably lost, his griefe for this would exceede the other. But because hee alwayes conceives some glimpse of Gods favour in the midst of this mourning, therefore this griefe seemes the lesse, though in regard of continuance it bee greater.

2. Case. Oh! but I have not attained to a just measure of bruisednesse.

Answer. If there bee such a measure of bruisednesse in thee as brings thee home to Christ, thou hast attained a sufficient measure to bring thee to Heaven.

But this distinction must bee remembered, that there is a double bringing of a man home to Christ.

1. One is, when a man is brought so farre towards Christ, as to be willing to take the crowne, and partake of the priviledges onely, but this is not sufficient; but when thy sorrow shall so bring thee home to Christ, that thou art willing to take

Christ's yoke on thee, to subject thy selfe to Christ in all things; So much sorrow and bruisednesse as this is sufficient to bring thee home.

3. *Case.* Oh, but though I am thus farre bruised, that I am willing to beare Christ's yoke, and to doe that hee shall command mee, yet I doe not finde that this promise is performed to me; God hides his face from mee, and I cannot finde him whom my Soule loves, and that I cannot finde that my sinnes are pardoned. And so for bruises belonging to sanctification; I have striven long against such lust, and cannot see it mortified any whit.

To this I answer, that Christ in withholding the Comfort, and suffering thee to be more laded, doth ever fulfill this promise here made, *Mat. 11. 28, Come unto me, &c.*

Objection. 1. But the Objection might be made; VVee have come unto thee, and yet finde no rest; Christ therefore addes: *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, &c.* The yoke of Christ is the government of Christ, the taking of this yoke upon us, is the subjecting out selves to this government.

Now, the government of Christ consists in two things.

1. First, it commands us to doe many things.

2. Sc.

Secondly, hee vwill have us to suffer many things: and if we take Christs yoke upon us, we must do both.

Now, a man is willing to doe many things that Christ commands, but stoppes at some things; There is some thing, some duty which he will not doe, as prayer, giving of almes, or some other: And so also for suffering, hee is willing to endure some things for Christ, but there is something againe, which hee cannot endure; Reproches, Scoffes, and the like.

If therefore God hold off comfort for any long season, let a man looke well to his spirit, and see if hee bee perfectly willing to take Christs yoke upon him, if hee were, the promise is certaine, and shall bee made good, hee shall finde rest to his soule; And if hee doe not, there is some fault in himselfe.

In the tenth of *Judges* ver. 10. to the end of the Chapter, there the people were burdened, &c. cryed unto the Lord, and yet found no rest; But God deferres comfort, and tels them, hee would deliver them no more; Then the people submitted themselves unto God, saying, Doe with us what pleaseth thee, and put away their strange Gods, ver. 16. and served God.

Now, when the Children of Israel were brought to this, to cast away the Reliques of Idolatry, and to serve the Lord perfectly; Then

Then it is said : *The Lords Spirit was grieved for the misery of Israel.*

So if a man would have peace, and have sought it long, and cannot finde it, let him see whether there bee not some relique of corruption which God would have cast out of the heart. And when it's done, and thou art willing to serve God perfectly, then thou shalt finde rest unto thy soule.

And so much for the second signe of true grace wrought in a man, to wit, if there be any life & strength in him, though it be mingled with much weaknesse.

3. The third we named, that where true grace was, there was heat. *Smoking flaxe will not be quenched* : where there is smoake, there fire; and where fire is, there is heate, bee it never so small; And this is added to the former of life : Life is nothing else but a sublimary heate, and where there is life, there is heat, all life is joynd with heate : But not on the contrary, where is heate, there is life; For cold things may be warmed from without by the Sunne; but where there is heate from an inward principle, there is life. The Spirit is compared to fire and heate; *Quench not the Spirit* : *He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire* : Or which is as fire. Therefore where

where this Spirit is in a man, there the Holy Ghost hath beene.

Now, this heare is nothing else but a solicitous and earnest desire to please God in all things, to get and encrease communion with Christ, and to be built up in grace.

I say, it is, first, a solicitous and earnest desire, a desire accompanied with carefulnesse, how he may doe to please God in all things; Whereas in other men there is a luke-warmnesse, a remilnesse in all things, they care not whether they doe it or no: But this is an earnest carefull desire, and that in the second place to please God: An hypocrite may have strong desires: Let him bee brought to have an apprehension of Gods wrath and Hell-fire, and he would have an earnest desire to be delivered: But all this is not to please God, but himselfe, and not God in all this: But our desire must be to please God; *See how the affections were stirred*; And what fruits it wrought, they were motives taken from God, and with desire tending to him, and so must we be.

3. Againe, this righteous fire hath in it this property, that it purifieth the heart from dross and filth, and it puts it selfe forth in holy actions; makes a man ready to pray, to speak profitably, and the like; As fire makes

men active ; and fit for action.

Lastly , it is alwayes guided by the spirit of judgement, when you minde that most, which the Scripture presseth most; where the heart is upright , a man despiseth none of the waies of God, not the meanest truth, but would know the all: but that which the Scripture most of all urgeth , that hee most earnestly presseth after, & labours to bring his heart unto them; as the Scripture is most love, and the like , so hee taketh most paines with his heart about this : Now therefore try by these properties, whether you have heate in you, or no.

Objection. Oh ! but I cannot finde this heate in mee , I cannot finde these holy affections in my heart.

Answer. I answer , consider if thou findest any affectiōs that are holy in thee, though not many ; yea, if thou findest none, consider if thou hast not this smoake ; for sometimes a man may finde the fire it selfe , sometimes only this smoake, what is it ?

I answer, when you finde not the affections so moving , as you see some others doe , yet you finde in your selfe a carefulnesse , and watchfulnesse of your wayes, that thou wilt not ruine into sinne , though thou canst not doe what good thou would'st : Why , heere

Is the smoake, and some fire, though but small; David was not able to doe as hee was wont to doe, to pray as hee was wont : (Psal. 51. 12.) And therefore hee prayes God to restore him his Spirit, and the joyes he was wont to have; But yet hee was carefull over his way afterwards: And if thou findest but this smoake, this care over thy wayes, this resolution to commit no knowne sinne, though thou findest not the flame of this holy affection, yet be not discouraged, thou hast that which is of the same nature within thee, Smoake is of the nature with flame, for flame is nothing but smoake set on fire, and therefore take comfort and continue constant still, till God inflames thee, and that is the 3. signe.

4. Where there is true grace wrought there is a combate & strife in the working: & afterwards till hee bring forth judgment into victory. Before victory there goes a combate: This then is implied, there must be a strife. *The Disciples strove amongst themselves who should bee the greatest in the Kingdome of Heaven.* This is a property of all his Servants: As Christs Kingdome is not of this World; So are they not apt to contend for any thing in this world. But you way know if you be Christs Servants or no, if you contend for spirituall things.

things. *Strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many shall seeke to enter in therat, but shall not be able. Luke 13. 24.* Wee see there are two dispositions of men, that some seeke, and are willing to goe to Heaven; but take no paines for it: These seeke, saith Christ, to enter, but shall not bee able to get in: But others strive and contend with all their power; And such must be our strife; if wee will get into Heaven. The difference betweene the wise Virgins, and the foolish lay in this; that the wise were more diligent than the other. *Mat. 25.* Formall professors may contend, but it is but for a fit; They are soone weary of this contention, they leave off rowing, and suffer the boate to go downe the streame: But wee must strive untill we get the victory, and run with *St. Paul* untill we get the prize, *1. Cor. 9. 24. 25.* And what made him to doe so? Why, hee considered 2 things; first, he look't on the Crowne, an incorruptible Crowne. Secondly, he was loath to run in vaine, and lose all his labour: So the reason why we doe not contend, is because vve doe not consider these 2 things, namely, the prize & crowne of revvard, and that else vva shall but lose our labour; and therefore vve must strive: If we be remisse, it is an argument that we have a name to live, but are dead.

And

And therefore consider it , there must bee a
 strife, and a combate ; And there will be that , by
 reason of that originall corruption that is in us :
 We have continuall worke with our owne hearts ;
 The flesh is ready to have the first hand in every
 businesse, if we doe not resist it ; Wee shall ex-
 ceedingly goe downe the winde , if we doe not
 strive, and that hard : For when there is an infused
 habit as grace is , and a corrupt nature contrary
 to it, nature is ready to take part with it , which
 was bred and borne with it. *When I would doe
 good, evil is still present with mee* : There is some-
 thing lay at the fountaine-head, as it were , and
 stopp him when he would doe any good. It is our
 case also, in wel-doing wee see how backward we
 are to begin, and when we have begun, how rea-
 dy we are to leave off. But if it be a businesse, that
 concernes our selves, we are ready to doe , yea,
 to over-doe it: How ready we are to idle words,
 how backward we are to profitable conference ;
 How ready to spend on our lusts, how backward
 to true liberality ; And so I might instance in di-
 vers others.

And therefore , seeing wee have this flesh a-
 bout us, wee had neede to strive ; It is that which
 a Christian should make account of, to doe that
 which he hath not a minde to doe, and not to doe
 that which he hath a minde to doe, and so still to
 doe the contrary , and strive against the lusts of
 the flesh, and so to restraints his nature from what
 he would doe.

1. *Objection.* But how should wee doe to
 contend thus ?

Answer. To give some directions. 1. *Tam. 6. 12. Fight the good fight of faith:* The acting of our faith, & setting it on worke when any thing comes to hinder us, will helpe us to overcome in this combate. Let a man beleieve the promise and threatnings of God, & he shall be able to resist the flesh: but let faith be asleepe, and it will quickly prevaile against us: *Ephe. 6. 16. Take the shield of faith:* Now, what a shield is for the defence of the body, that faith is for the defence of the soule. When any temptations are suggested unto us, faith is it that repels them; Never is a man overcome but through defect of faith, or when the habit lies hid asleepe in us: *Hebr. 11.* When they set their faith on worke, what marvellous things did they? What made *Ieroboam* so weake: What was it that overcame *Eve*? but onely that shee did not beleieve stedfastly the word of God. On the contrary, what was it that strengthened *Daniel*, the three children, and infinite others? it was their faith.

The Saints when they have the use of their faith, are very strong: but when they have not the use of faith, are very weake as other men; as *Abraham*, how weake was hee, when hee exposed his wives chastity for want of faith? *David* when he dissembled, and *Peter* when he denied his Master; but when he was strengthened through faith, how bold was he before the Councell? it was his faith that enabled him to fight the good fight, because hee kept the faith in the profession of it, and in the practice of it, and in reaching of it, and therefore if we would be strengthened to resist our

spirituall enemies, we must labour to set our faith on worke, that is the first meanes.

The second meanes, Saint Peter sets downe :
*1. Peter. 2. 11. Dearely beloved, I beseech you as
 strangers and pilgrims abstaine from fleshly lusts
 which war against the soule.*

First, consider that you are but strangers & pilgrims: for if you take the pleasures in the world, you cannot sit by them, why? you are but strangers, therefore abstaine from them.

Againe; consider that these lusts they fight against the soule. No man in the world, that did consider that such a man now knocked at the doore, whom if he did let in, would cut his throat but that hee would use all meanes to barre him out: why this now is our case; they seeke our lives, nay our soules; they fight, there is their force; They seeke to prevaile by maine force if they can, if they cannot, then they seeke to proceed by fraud & cunning: they are ready to perswade us, that they are friends, and not enemies, and that you may go to heaven though you yeeld to them, and that you may quickly overcome them; that if you satisfie them for the present, they will be gone, and troble you no more, & a thousand such like: but take heed, fight against them, keepe them out not onely for the present, for they renew the battell; as an enemy if he bee too weake at one time in one place, increaseth his forces, takes more advantages, and renews his battaile againe.

So doe these, they will set upon us againe and againe with a fresh force, and if they cannot prevaile one way, they will try another way, and if they cannot doe good by one, they will use all wayes.

And then consider the end of this fight, it is to kill and destroy; as wee know the end of a fight is: Now these lusts they fight against your soule, and nothing will satisfie them but your life. Every time they set upon you, it is a buffering; Every time you yeeld to them, it is a wounding; and if you doe not resist and strive against them, they will procure your utter perdition. And therefore I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstaine from fleshly lusts which warre against your soules.

Object. Yes, I could be content to strive, if there were any hope of doing any good: But I am affraid I shall be overcome, and therefore as good yeeld at the first, as at the last.

Answer. I answer, there is great hope, yea assurance of victory, wheresoever true grace is, though it may be held downe long, and suffer many oppositions. Yet in the end he shall be sure of victory, Till he bring forth judgment into victory.

A list signe to know if there be saving grace, yea or no, if there be, it shal at last have the upper hand, but all through Christ; *Hee that hath begun that good work, will perfitt it. For he will do it, for he is faithfull, and in him we shall be more than conquerors, not through our selves; We are apt to be discouraged, when wee sit downe and consider what*

what corruptions we have arising from our nature which we thinke we shall never master. True we cannot doe it in our owne strength but *Christ* hath undertaken to doe it for us he shall subdue our iniquities

There are 2. things in the kingdome of *grace*, which when wee looke on are apt to make us discouraged.

1 First, when a man lookes on his owne strength and sees how little he can doe of himselfe.

2 Secondly, vwhen he lookes on the Kindome of *grace* abroad, and sees how it goes downe the vvind, and how the vvicked prevaile & the godly are weake and goe to the wall: But *Christ* hee afford us his strength against our lusts subdue them, and for the enemies of the Gospell, he will trample them all under his feet; It is his promile, *Hee will bring forth Iudgemena into victory.* Now *Christ* doth this 2 waies: 1, by watering the buds the seeds of *grace*, & maketh them to spring up as Willowes by the water courses: *His branches shall spread, & his beauty shal be as the Olive-Tree, & his smell as Lebanon: they shall revive as the Corne, & grow as the Olive, &c.*

2. Secondly, by removing all these impediments, which hinder the growth of *grace* any way: And therefore now let us not bee discouraged, but make use of these promises of *Sanctification*, which we are apt to forget: And though we be weak as a bruised Reed, or as the smoaking Flaxe yet let us not faint nor give over, but bee encouraged to strue & contend without reasoning seeing we are sure the day shall bee ours, for so is his pro-

promise, A bruised reed shall he not breake, & smou-
king flaxe shall he not quench, till he bring forth
Iudgment into victory,

F I N I S

